

NICOLL'S COMMENTARIES EXCERPTS

Birdlip, January 9, 1943

As you know, *understanding* is defined clearly in this system. *Understanding* is the arithmetical mean between your knowledge and your being. So you see that to have knowledge of these ideas is not enough. It is quite easy to see when a person only has knowledge but not understanding of this Work. If you understand something you can speak of it in different ways; if it is merely knowledge you will speak of it from memory.

Now as regards *efforts on being*. Everyone must make conscious effort on his being every day, and especially at this period of time when everyone is going to sleep. If you wish to take life as your teacher, then, as was said in a previous paper, you must practise *non-identifying* with what life brings you, pleasant or unpleasant, for a certain time every day. Life demands mechanical effort, but if you practise non-identifying, it becomes conscious effort. Only do it for a certain time-say an hour and keep conscious and observe yourself carefully. For instance, make your aim not to object to anything for an hour. This helps you to see what non-identifying means. Afterwards you can relax as regards work and do what you want if you like. But either work or don't work, and know what you are doing. Do not be in between centres. Do not drift for lack of any mental direction-and do not at this time fall asleep. To relax is not necessarily to fall asleep.

Now as regards working on special things in yourself and making effort in regard to them-that is, on the side of your being, on the kind of person you are and the way you react. First take your negative self-that is, your daily negative emotions. Try to see first of all that you are negative and acknowledge it. This helps by itself. Now, as you know, it takes another person to make you negative. So ask yourself some questions such as these:

- (1) Do I think I am badly treated by someone?
- (2) Am I jealous of someone?
- (3) Is it mechanical disliking?

This helps you to formulate your situation to yourself. Now try to formulate the answers to yourself. Then try to think what *external considering* means. External considering means putting yourself in another person's position and realizing his or her difficulties. It is one way of *transforming* life. So now *become* the person you think has treated you badly or the person you are jealous of, etc. Try to do this sincerely. It requires a conscious effort. Visualize yourself as the person and reverse the position-that is, you become the person you dislike or hate or criticize, and you are now looking at another person, called yourself. As a rule this will cure you very quickly, if you can do it. But if you are in an evil state of negative emotion-as we all are at times-nothing will help you save realizing what you yourself are like-that is, what evil you have in you and what you are really like.

This is painful. But we cannot change without pain. The Work is a mirror and everyone in it can help you to see your own self in that mirror. But you will not understand this unless you see yourself in others or others in yourself. *External considering* is the main way to deal with negative emotions. But it is necessary to understand what it means. It depends on visualization. External considering takes some time. It is difficult to do sincerely –that is rightly. It requires always a great effort to do it. But it acts on being directly,

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Birdlip, September 29, 1943

THE THREE LINES OF WORK

We speak briefly to-night of the three lines of Work and of External Considering. All three lines are necessary. The first is work on oneself. This includes work on the side of knowledge and work on the side being. To work on knowledge means here to work on knowledge of the Work. To work on being means to observe oneself from the standpoint of what the Work teaches so that one actually sees one's own personality one's negative states, internal considering, identifying, mechanical talking, mechanical disliking, self-justifying and so on, and to struggle with them. Mechanicalness and sleep prevent change of being. It is necessary to understand that knowledge of one's being is required before we can work on ourselves, and this is gained through the effort of attention called self-observation. The first step is the realization that we are not one but many, and that our being is characterized by absence of unity. Self-study is different from the study of the knowledge of the Work. Both require effort, however. You have often heard it said that this Work is to make us think. It is impossible to get to know this system of teaching unless one makes the effort of thinking for oneself. Writing it down in note-books is not the same as thinking, but remembering what was said requires the effort of directed thinking. The first line of Work is to make us know our state of being and state of knowledge. Otherwise we cannot change. To observe is the first thing, but it must be without criticism or analysis. It has been said, on one occasion, that you can change nothing until you know all yourself.

The second line of Work is work in conjunction with other people in the Work. Unless you practise the first line of Work you cannot practise the second. Again, unless you practise the second, you cannot practise the first rightly. There are several reasons for this, which it would be useful for the Group to discuss.

The third line of Work is-for us at present-to help the Work in general and try to see what is required of us and not talk wrongly or harm the Work. Right valuation and right attitude to the Work belong to the third line, but they enter into everything, because unless one has valuation and right attitude one will work neither on oneself nor with others nor for the Work. As was said already, all three lines of work are necessary. A man working by himself and 'only for himself cannot get anywhere. To begin with, he has not the force to do so.

Now, to return to the first line of Work and to personal work on oneself. It is necessary to know the Work and apply its ideas to oneself. It is then possible to begin to understand the Work. But you cannot apply the ideas of the Work to yourself unless you observe yourself and what goes on within you in their light. Self-observation lets a ray of light into our inner darkness, but only when the Work accompanies it -that is, when one observes oneself in the light of the teaching. What does the Work teach you to observe in yourself? It is very useful to make a list and then notice if you put it into practice-that is, whether you actually apply the Work or whether you dream you are working.

The second line of Work cannot be done unless you gain knowledge of your being. Unless we observe ourselves and notice how we think of or speak to others who are in the Work we cannot put ourselves in their position. This brings us to *external considering*, which belongs to the second line of Work. External considering is putting yourself in the position of your neighbour. In the New Testament it is called "love of neighbour". In order to put yourself in the position of another person in the Work, you must know your being-the kind of person you are. Otherwise you will leave yourself out. Your neighbour, of course, sees you. But if you do not see yourself, how can you put yourself in another's position? One should think of this because it explains why so much wrong and false "external considering" exists, which only causes irritation or perhaps hatred. Another practical thing about the second line of Work, to prevent useless friction, is not taking in negative impressions of other people in the Work. They accumulate and produce a poison. To see only the worst sides of others is, of course, to be fast asleep. When an impression falls on a negative part of a centre there is a brief moment in which, if you are awake, you can render it null and void by not accepting it. If, however, you identify with it, however little, it lodges in you and collects others like itself. The last point that I will mention is that everyone should try to stop mechanical liking and disliking and the kinds of conversations that arise from them. We cannot expect to get much force from impressions if everything falls either on mechanical like or mechanical dislike. Nor can we expect any development of the second line of Work in us, in which case the first line will be held up.

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SELF-OBSERVATION

There are many things that can be said about self-observation and what it is and what it is not. The whole of the Work starts from a man beginning to observe himself. Self-observation is a means of self-change. Serious and continuous self-observation if done aright leads to definite inner changes in man.

Let us, first of all, consider self-observation in connection with a mistake often made about it. The mistake is the confusing of self-observation with *knowing*. To know and to observe are not the same thing. Speaking superficially, you may *know* you are sitting in a chair in your room, but can you say that you actually observe it? Speaking more deeply, you may *know* you are in a negative state, but that does not mean that you are *observing* it. A person in the Work said to me that he disliked somebody intensely. I said: "Try to observe it." He replied: "Why should I observe it? I don't need to. I *know* it already." In such a case, the person is confusing *knowing* with *observing*-that is, he does not understand what self-observation is. Moreover he has not grasped that *self-observation*, which is active, is a means of self-change, whereas merely knowing, which is passive, is not. Knowing is not an act of attention. Self-observation is an act of attention directed inwards to what is going on in you. The attention must be active-that is, directed. In the case of a person you dislike, you notice what thoughts crowd into your mind, the chorus of voices speaking in you, what they are saying, what unpleasant emotions surge up, and so on. You notice also that you are treating the person you dislike very badly inside. Nothing is too bad to think of him or feel about him. But to see all this requires *directed attention*, not passive attention. The attention comes from the *observing side*, whereas the thoughts and emotions belong to the *observed side* in yourself. This is dividing yourself into two. There is a saying: "A man is first one, then two, and then one." The observing side, or Observing 'I', stands interior to, or above, the observed side, but its power of independent consciousness varies because it may be submerged at any moment. Then you are completely identified with the negative state. You do not observe the state but you are the state. You can then say that you know you are negative, but that is not to observe it. If the Observing 'I' is supported by other 'I's which value the Work and recall it and wish to become more conscious, then it is not so easily submerged by the flood of negative things. It is then helped by-and is a part of-Deputy-Steward. All this is quite different from merely knowing one is negative. Passive knowing can be said to be mechanical in contrast to self-observation which is a *conscious act* and cannot become mechanical. Mechanical self-observation has nothing to do with Work self-observation.

People not only confuse knowing with the continuous act of self-observation but they mistake *thinking* for observing. To think is quite different from observing oneself. A man may think about himself all day and never observe himself once. The observation of one's thoughts is not the same as thinking. It should be clear now that *knowing* and *thinking* are not the same as observation.

The question is often asked: "What must I observe?" First, the Work explains carefully what you must begin to observe. But later a man must attain to fuller observation of himself-for a whole day--or a week-and see himself as an outside person. He must think

what he would think if he met himself. He would, of course, cordially dislike this man who is himself. A man must observe *everything* in himself and always as if it were not himself but IT. This means that he must say: "What is IT doing?" not "What am I doing?" He then sees now these thoughts going on in him, now these emotions, now these private plays and self-dramas, now these elaborate lies, now these speeches, excuses and inventions, and so on, passing through him, one after the other. Next moment, of course, he goes to sleep again and takes part in them all. That is, he acts in the play he has composed and thinks it is real. He thinks he is the part he invented.

Let us consider this viewpoint further. A man must be able to say; "This is not me" to all his set pieces and his songs, to all the performances going on in him, to all the voices that he takes as his own. You know how sometimes just before going to sleep at night, you hear loud voices in your head. These are 'I's speaking. During the day, they are speaking all the time, only you take them as 'I'-as yourself. But just before sleep, a separation takes place naturally, for connections are being broken between centres and between 'I's in order that sleep may be possible. Two or more 'I's can keep you from sleeping. So you hear them, as it were, as voices talking, just for a moment, because they are being separated by natural processes from you.

Inner separation means the power of not merely saying: "This is not I", but ultimately of actually perceiving it for oneself---*perceiving that it is true*, that "this is not I", not merely thinking it is so or trying to persuade oneself it is, or saying this is what the Work says.

When you are in an unpleasant state, if you observe yourself over some considerable time, you will notice that all sorts of different groups of unpleasant 'I's try to deal with it in succession and make something out of it. This is because negative 'I's live by being negative. Their life consists in negative thinking or negative feeling-that is, in providing you with unpleasant thoughts and feelings. It is their delight to do so for it is their life. In the Work, the enjoyment of negative states must be observed sincerely, especially the secret enjoyment of them. The reason is that if a man enjoys being negative, in whatever forms, and they are legion, he can never separate from them. You cannot separate yourself from what you have a secret affection for. The case actually is that you identify with the negative 'I's through secret affection and so feel their enjoyment, for whatever you identify with you become. A man in himself is constantly transforming himself into different 'I's. He has nothing permanent, but by separation he can make something permanent. The line of separation is between what likes and what hates the Work.

Now we speak once more of observing *talking*. All rules are about talking, practically speaking, and how to deal with wrong talking. It is necessary to observe *inner talking* and from where it is coming. Wrong inner talking is the breeding-ground not only of many future unpleasant states but also of wrong outer talking. You know that there is in the Work what is called the practice of *inner silence*. The practice and meaning of inner silence is like this: first, it must be about something quite distinct and definite; and second, it is like not touching it. That is, you cannot practise inner silence in any vague general way, save perhaps as an experiment for a time. But you can practise it rigidly in regard to some distinct and definite thing, something you know and see quite clearly.

Someone once asked: "Is practising inner silence the same as not letting something come into your mind?" The answer is no. It is not the same. What you are practicing inner silence about is already in the mind and you must be aware of it, but you must not touch it with your inner speech, your inner tongue. Your outer literal tongue likes to touch sore places, as when a tooth hurts. So does your inner tongue. But if it does, the sore thing in your mind flows into your inner speech and unwraps itself as *inner talking* in every direction. You have noticed of course that inner talking always goes on in negative states and that it coins many unpleasant phrases, which suddenly find expression in outer talking, perhaps long after. In the Work we are told that it is necessary to be careful about wrong outer talking at first, and, later on, about wrong inner talking. Actually, wrong outer talking is mostly due to wrong inner talking. Wrong inner talking, particularly venomous and evil inner talking, and so on, makes a mess within, like excrement. They are all different forms of lying and this is why they have such strength and persistence. Lies are always more powerful than truth because they can hurt. If you observe wrong inner talking you will notice it is only half-truths, or truths connected in the wrong order, or with something added or left out. In other words, it is simply lying to oneself. If you say, "Is this quite true?" it may stop it, but it will find another set of lies. Eventually you must dislike it. If you enjoy it, you will never lessen its power. It is not enough to dislike liking it: you must dislike it.

All this belongs to the purification of the emotional life. Mechanically we only like ourselves, and so we dislike or hate those who do not like us. A development of being is not possible, and quite obviously so, unless the emotions cease to have only this basis of *self-liking*. External considering, in the Work, is putting oneself in the position of others. This is referred to in the Gospels: "All things . . . whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt.: VII 12). This is one of the definite formulations in the Gospels of what in the Work is called External Considering. But a man must think very deeply what it says and perceive internally what it means, because it has an outer and an inner meaning. If you say: "I always think of others," then observe it. It is probably a buffer. You do not notice perhaps that you say things, or you write things, which, if you received, you would not tolerate for a moment. This is one very interesting form of self-observation and it includes observing "inner talking". In yourself everyone else is helpless. You can, as it were, drag a person into the cave of yourself and do what you like with her or him. You may be polite naturally, but in the Work, which is all about purifying or organizing the inner life, it is not enough. It is how you behave internally and invisibly to one another that really counts. This is very difficult to understand. You may think you know this already. But to *understand*—even to begin to *understand* it—takes many years of work. When the inner corresponds with the outer and when the outer obeys the inner, then a man possesses a "second body". As we are, our outer life does not correspond with our inner life, and our outer life controls our inner. The inner grows by seeing the good of something. Recently here we were talking of what the saint, Cassian, says about a man being able to do the same thing for different reasons, A man may act from fear—fear of law, fear of reputation, fear of opinion. Then he acts from outside. Or he may act from ambition—and many other similar forms of self-interest. Or he may act from good—from seeing the good of acting so. This develops the internal man. Now all this can be a subject of self-observation. But even the first stages of self-observation have

a certain effect. They let in rays of light into the darkness of our psychic life. It is the psychic life we have to think of in the Work. All the instructions of the Work are about one's psychic life, which is in chaos. In this way, self-observation becomes deeper, and the valuation of the Work becomes more and more internal. So the Work begins to act on Essence--on what is the real part of a man.

Work on oneself is always the same. It does not matter where you are. You are always in contact with the Work if your inner attitude to it is right. If your inner attitude is right, the Work will teach you about what work on yourself means. If your inner attitude is wrong, it cannot, because you block the way. In all self-observation, if it is to become full self-observation, you must observe IT. That is, you must see all your reactions to life and circumstances as IT in you and not as 'I'. If you say 'I', then nothing can happen. The saying of 'I', the feeling of 'I', makes it impossible to change. If to every negative state you say 'I', then you cannot escape it. At first a man takes himself as one and says 'I' to all that happens in his psychic life. But in order to change he must become two. He must divide himself into IT and Observing -'I'-that is, into two. Then, later on, he may become one--a unity. The instrument of self-observation is like a knife that cuts us away from what is not us. If you begin to see what it means to say: "This is not I", then you begin to use this instrument.

When you can really say: "What is IT doing?" instead of "What am,I doing?" you understand the Work. The Work is to make a new set of reactions or rather new ways of taking things. As long as you are nothing but ordinary life-reactions, you cannot change. When you take ordinary things in a new way you begin to change. You cannot remain the same and change. If you are always the same it means that you always react to life in the same way. You insist on your pound of flesh. The idea of change is not to be the same. The idea of the Work is to change oneself. The idea of self-observation is to separate from *what one was* by not going with what one observes. In this way self-observation is a means of self-change.

When you have begun to form in yourself the powerful mental instrument of this Work, you will find that wherever you turn it, you will catch new meanings. The Work forms in us a new instrument of reception, a new apparatus for receiving impressions, both from outside and from inside. The Work lies in parts that have to be joined together by means of *understanding*. Each part of the Work, each separate idea, each bit of the teaching, is exactly like the parts of, say, a radio-machine. The parts of a radio are, let us say, lying on a table and you can see them. If you know enough, if you understand what they are, you can put them together and then the instrument begins to work and you hear all sorts of invisible things that otherwise you could not hear. In the case of the Work, each part is not something physical, an outer object lying on a table, but is psychical--an idea, a thought, a direction, a formulation, a diagram, and so on. If all these parts are fitted together by understanding, and valuation, the Work forms a new and organized apparatus in you. That is, you are newly organized. You have a new psychic organism in you. The Work is actually a whole and complete *organism* which is given little by little, part by part, but all these parts are parts of a true *whole*. If the Work is thus formed in you, you have a new thing, a new organized instrument, in you. Even a single part of the Work, if

taken in with valuation and understanding will begin to work a change in you, because it will transmit *new influences*. But the whole of the Work must be formed in a man. This can be thought of as *another body*-another organized thing in a man-if the man *lives* the Work. Then it will control the man he *was*.

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Birdlip, February 22, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

Amongst the many things that we have to observe in ourselves and work upon, according to this teaching that we are studying, there is the psychological state called *internal considering*. This refers to a process which takes a great deal of force from us and, like everything that takes energy from us uselessly, keeps us asleep.

Internal considering is a branch of identifying. As you know, the study of identifying in all its different branches is one of the most important forms of practical work on oneself. A man who identifies with everything is unable to remember himself. In order to remember oneself is necessary not to identify. But in order to learn not to identify a man must first of all learn not to be identified with himself. One form of identifying is internal considering, of which there are several kinds, and some are forms of identifying with oneself. One of the most frequent forms of internal considering is *thinking what others think of us*, and how they treat us, and what attitude they show towards us. A man may feel he is not valued enough and this torments him and makes him suspect others and causes him to lose an immense amount of energy and may develop in him a distrustful and hostile attitude.

Closely connected with this is that form of identifying called *making accounts*. A man begins to feel that people owe him, that he deserves better treatment, more rewards, more recognition, and he writes all this down in a psychological account-book, the pages of which he is continually turning over in his mind. And such a man begins to pity himself so much that it may be almost impossible to talk to him about anything without making him at once refer to all his sufferings. All accounts of this kind, all feelings that you are owed by other people and *that you owe nothing yourself*, are of very great psychological consequence to the inner development of a man.

A man in the Work can only grow through the forgiveness of others. That is, unless you cancel your debts, nothing in you can grow. It is said in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Feeling you are owed, feeling debts, stops everything. You hold back yourself and you hold back the other person. This is the inner meaning of Christ's remark that one should make peace with one's enemy. He says:

"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out until thou hast paid the last farthing." (Matt. V 25, 26)

If you are going to exact psychologically every pound of flesh or every "farthing" from a man who owes you-that is, if you are going to make everyone apologise and make amends and eat the dust, then you will be *under* the exacting law that Christ warns you to escape from. You will put yourself in prison-that is, under unnecessary laws-and you will

not get out until you have paid on your side for all your *own* faults But there is a *law of mercy* - that is, an influence higher than the literal law of an eye for an eye, which is the law of the man of violence. This is an example of "putting yourself under new influences". If you want to put yourself under better influences coming down the Ray of Creation, you must behave differently, take everything differently-that is, *work*. You must put yourself first under the influences of the Work and try to obey them. That means, you must hear and do the Work. In the Work, negative emotions, internal considering, making accounts, feeling violent, jealous, etc. are not encouraged. Now if you make inner accounts, then you feel always that someone owes you. Try to *think* what this means: and then try to *observe* what it means in yourself and then finally try to do what the Work says-i.e. separate. And do not imagine it is quite easy. The Work means *work-hard work-on yourself*. Remember that this Work is for those who really wish to work and change themselves. It is not for those who wish to change the world.

We now come to a fuller description of one form of internal considering, but you must understand that you must observe this form in yourself. No one can work on himself without observing what this Work tells him to observe in himself and seeing what it is he has to work on. You must be able to perceive your inner state at any particular time as distinct from your outer physical body and what it is doing. Once people can distinguish between their physical appearance and their inner states, they can begin to work. They see that they have a body which obeys orders, and a psychology. The Work is about what a person is psychologically. Let us speak today of that aspect of a person called in the Work "*Singing your Song*". This is psychological, not physical, singing. It is based on internal considering -making inner accounts- that is, feeling what you are owed and recording it in memory. Everyone has a song to sing in this respect. If you really want to know what kinds of inner accounts you have made throughout your life, begin to notice the typical "songs you sing". When a person in the Work is called a "good singer", this refers to the songs he or she sings. Sometimes people sing their songs without any encouragement and sometimes, after a few glasses of wine, they begin to sing openly. They sing about how badly they have been treated, about how they never had a real chance, about their past glories, about how no one understood their difficulties, about how they married wrongly, about how their parents did not understand them, about how nice they really are, about how they have been unappreciated, misunderstood, and so on, and all this means how everyone is to-blame except themselves. All this is making *inner accounts*, or rather it is the result of making accounts. This is one form of internal considering.

Now why do you think it is necessary in the Work to get rid as far as possible of songs? Why is it necessary to notice them, to starve them, to push them away, out of a central position in one's life, until they are sung only on rare occasions, in faint voice, and perhaps, finally, never? They cripple you inside. They take energy. You smile-bravely-you all know that brave smile-and it is all lies. A good singer in the Work cannot get beyond himself. He is a victim of his own account-making. As soon as anything is difficult he begins singing. This stops him: he cannot grow. He perhaps begins to weep. He cannot change his level of being. He cannot get beyond what he is-i.e. crippled by sad songs. It is a sign of being. Being is what you *are* and to change being one must not be

what one is. Instead of working on himself in some difficult situation, he begins to sing at once, perhaps very nicely and quietly. If he is criticized or spoken to sharply, he begins to pity himself, or gets furious, and feels he is not understood, and so on. And then he begins to sing, either softly to himself or to others, especially to people who will listen to him--or, it may be, to her. Often a person makes friends with another person only because it is easy to sing his or her song to him or her, and if the latter suddenly tells him in so many words to "shut up", he or she is so deeply offended that he goes in search of a new friend- a person who will really *understand* him or her, as the expression goes -as if anyone could understand another person, just like that. 'If only', they say. To understand another, one must first understand oneself, and this only begins after long work on oneself and catching glimpses of what one is really like. A good singer certainly does not understand himself. He prefers to sing the song that he is misunderstood and so he dreams of a marvellous world in which everything is arranged so that he is the central figure in it. And this attitude and these dreams create a weakness and, in fact, a real, psychological sickness, for which a man may have to pay all through life.

He has, as it were, let life overcome him. But you must realize that this does not apply merely to people who make no effort, to people who are not adjusted. It applies also to people who do make ordinary efforts and who yet are sick in this sense because they feel life owes them things that they have never attained. They feel they should be happier and very often think that other people seem to be happier. And other people think the same thing of them. And although they do not sing their songs openly perhaps songs go on in them secretly. They feel an inner sadness, a sense of monotony, a kind of inner tiredness or frustration around which thoughts gather. It is about these *inner secret songs* that I wish to speak tonight. For they also stand in one's way, and very often they are not observed, although they are all the time secretly eating one's life. Only deeper self-observation will reveal them. All self-observation is to let light in – to oneself. Nothing can change in us unless it is brought into the light of self-observation—that is, into the light of consciousness -and all self-observation is to make us more conscious of what is going on *in us*.

You know, you must observe yourself when you are alone, just as much as when you are with people. Self-observation is inner attention. Do not think that when you are alone there is no need for inner attention. When you are alone, quite different 'I's, different forms of imagination, different thoughts, different moods, come forward. You must not think that you are necessarily in good company when you are alone. You may easily be in the worst company and yet not even think of observing where you are in yourself and what company you are keeping in yourself. Your most negative and most dangerous 'I's may come forward when you are alone. You may have quite well-written songs that only come when you are quite alone-when you feel no one is looking. Yes, but you must look. You must never feel no one is looking, simply because the door is shut. You must never feel that you can indulge yourself in your worst negative 'I's just because you are alone and that therefore you can behave as you like in yourself. You must cultivate quite a new idea of your responsibility to yourself in this respect. To think that you can go to sleep in yourself just because there is no one there and that you can enjoy all your inner negative talking for that reason is to have no proper conception of what this Work means. It means

that you have no inner sincerity- and this Work demands inner sincerity as the first thing that is essential. In life we keep up outer appearances. But in the Work the case is quite different. It is about what goes on in you-inside yourself, in your thoughts and feelings. By *inner work* on ourselves when we are alone, we can often change a whole outer situation. But we cannot do that without inner sincerity and observing which 'I's in us are lying or twisting things and so on. We may make an aim not to be negative with some person, but if we are alone and let our negative 'I's say what they please and make no effort not to identify with them, then we are not working sincerely-and we can undo a week of work in a few moments. If we do not go with negative 'I's in public, but indulge them in private, what do we think we are doing? We certainly have not begun to understand what work means. We must handle a person we are working with as carefully and as consciously in our inner thoughts and feelings as we do externally from polite manners. If we cannot see what this means, then we do not see what self-observation means.

On one occasion I was sitting with Mr. Ouspensky. We had been silent. He looked up at me with a smile and asked me why I was so sad. I said I did not know that I was. He said: "It is a habit. You are listening to some 'I's that are singing some sad far-away song, perhaps a song without words or words you have forgotten. Try to observe it. It takes force from you and is quite useless." And he added: "This is an example of the Moon eating you."

I give this as an example of what I call in this commentary "inner secret songs". We know that the Work sometimes speaks of sacrifice -that we must sacrifice something in order to get anything. What does the Work say that we must sacrifice first of all? It says we must sacrifice *our suffering*. We express our suffering often in songs, articulate and inarticulate. I am calling attention here to these inner inarticulate songs that we should try to observe and which can make us easily lose force, without our knowing what is happening. They are, as it were, strange little sad private relationships we have with ourselves, that steal force from us and that we do not notice because they are habits.

Birdlip, March 1, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

II

The more requirements you make, the more internal considering you will have. You will always be disappointed and feel that somebody else is to blame. People who make many requirements make life very difficult for themselves. Nothing is right: they are not surrounded by the right people, they are not treated properly, and so on. In this Work we must gradually feel our own nothingness by observation.

The opposite to internal considering is external considering. External considering is thinking of others. It is one of the few things in the Work that we are actually told to do. We are told not to internally consider and not to have negative emotions, and so on, but we are told to externally consider just as we are told to remember ourselves. When we are in a state of internal considering (and this is our usual state) we are really thinking only of ourselves. We regard ourselves as the centre of the Universe. Like Copernicus, we have to realize that we are not the centre of the Universe. To internally consider gives us only self-emotions and as these increase the character becomes more shut in. You all know people, surely, to whom you cannot speak for a moment without their beginning to tell you what troubles they have, what a hard life they lead, and so on. Such people are ruined. They are dead. You know that the Work says that it is negative emotions that govern the world, and not sex or power. just think how many people are completely ruined by constantly indulging in negative emotions. Internal considering is a branch of identifying. It is closely connected with negative states in us. You must not think that the opposite to internal considering consists in a hearty, optimistic manner and loud laughter. This is not external considering.

I will now quote what Mr. Ouspensky once said about external considering:

"The opposite of internal considering, and what is in part a means of fighting against it, is 'external considering'. External considering is based upon an entirely different relationship towards people from internal considering. It is adaptation towards people, to *their* understanding, to *their* requirements. By considering externally a man does that which makes life easy for other people and for himself. External considering requires a knowledge of men, an understanding of their tastes, habits and superstitions. At the same time external considering requires a great power over oneself, a great control over oneself. Very often a man desires not to express or to show to another man what he really thinks of him or feels about him. But if he is a weak man he will of course give way and say what he really thinks and afterwards justify himself and say that he did not want to lie, did not want to pretend, but wanted to be sincere. Then he convinces himself that it was the other man's fault. He really wanted to externally consider him, even to give way to him, not to quarrel, and so on. But the *other man* did not at all want to consider him, so that nothing could be done with him. It very often happens that a man begins with a blessing and ends with a curse: he begins by deciding to externally consider, and

afterwards blame other people for not externally considering him. This is an example of how *external* considering passes into *internal* considering. But if a man really remembers himself, he understands that another man is a *machine* just as he is himself, and then he will *enter into his position*, he will put himself in his place, and he will be really able to understand and feel what another man thinks and feels. If he can do this, his work becomes easier for him. But if he approaches a man with his own requirements nothing except new internal considering can ever be obtained from it.

Right external considering is very important *in the Work*. It often happens that people who understand very well the necessity of external considering in life do not understand the necessity of external considering in the Work. They even imagine that just because they are in the Work they have a right not to consider others: whereas in reality, in the Work -that is, for Man's successful work -ten times more external considering is necessary than in life, because only external considering on his part shows his valuation of the Work and his understanding of the Work -and success in the Work is always proportional to the valuation and understanding of it. Remember that work cannot begin and cannot proceed on a level lower than that of ordinary life -that is, it must begin on the level of Good Householder. This is a very important principle, which, for some reason or other, is usually forgotten. People must behave as Good Householders."

In the Work external considering is more necessary than in life. It does not make "self-emotions", but "others-emotions " The second one (line?) of the Work, Work in conjunction with others, brings in the necessity of external considering, of putting ourselves into another person's place, of realizing other people's difficulties. In the practice of external considering it is necessary to realize that other people are mirrors of ourselves. If you have taken an album of good photographs of yourself through long self-observation, then you will not have to look far in it to find in yourself what you object to so much in the other person and then you will be able to put yourself in the other person's position, to realize that he has also this thing that you have noticed in yourself, that he has his inner difficulties, just as much as you have, and so on. External considering can be practised when you are alone. I will give you one example: go over carefully what you said to someone and put yourself in his place by visualizing him saying the same things to you and using the same intonation. External considering is as vast and as varied in its range as is internal considering. There cannot be right development of the Emotional Centre without the practice of external considering: valuation of this Work, and the practice of external considering develop Emotional Centre. The more you value this Work the less can false personality govern you, the less vanity can you have, and the more you externally consider the less important will you think yourself.

In this Work there is no such thing as pretending to do good when you really *will* bad. It is no use pretending to be nice to other people when you hate them in your heart. All this Work depends on inner sincerity. External considering is not hypocrisy, it is not "good

works," but it is a question of inner attitude. Remember that when you find the same thing in yourself that you are blaming in someone else it has the magical effect of cancelling the whole situation out. This is real "forgiving". You know that our natural state is to be very surprised that there is anything wrong with ourselves. Of course we often blame ourselves, as it were. We say, for example: "Yes, I am afraid I was very much to blame for that incident." "Yes, certainly you were," says the other person. Are you not then very startled? Why, you will be hurt and offended at once. All this is because it is very difficult to think that anything is wrong with us and it is all part of the sleep we are in, the deep sleep that covers all humanity. Now self-observation is very harsh and becomes more harsh. If it is done sincerely it will hurt. But it lets light in and stops all sorts of rank weeds from growing within, and amongst them all the strange growths due to internal considering and self-pity and song-singing. And then at last we begin to see what it means that a man must realize that he is nothing before he can expect to *be* something.

With regard to that form of internal considering which is based on feeling that life has cheated you, that you should be in a different situation, you must remember that the Work says very emphatically that everyone starts from where he should be. It says that the conditions under which you encounter this Work are the right conditions for you. Nothing is more absurd than to think that one's life is being wasted in this Work. It is extraordinary that people have very narrow opinions as to what life should be like. They have as it were one or two prescriptions for life and if a person's life does not correspond to these prescriptions it is regarded as being wasted or useless and with such an outlook a person may internally consider a great deal and feel that everything is against him, even God and the whole Universe, and it is simply because he does not take his life in the right way. He makes requirements which cannot be satisfied. He is like a person who goes into a grocer's shop and asks for a top-hat or a sewing-machine and does not take what can be sold to him. The forces of hypnotism which keep Man asleep are the same for everyone. If *awakening* is your aim, then whatever your circumstances are, it should make no difference to you, unless perhaps you are forcibly deprived of the Work. You heard the section on Karma Yoga read out a week or two ago. No better formulation has been made as far as I know about how to avoid internal considering in connection with the ordinary circumstances of your life. Since internal considering is a form of identifying you will realize that the practice of non-identifying which Mr. Ouspensky outlined in terms of the word *detachment* is the cure for internal considering. If you realize that internal considering can become a real illness and can ruin you, if you can see it at work in yourselves, then you will do all in your power to try to escape from it. It is no good saying, for instance, "Oh, so and so has no idea what life is like for a person like me." It will only increase your internal considering. It is the internal considering in yourself that has to be stopped or else it will grow and grow and grow. It will spread a fire over everything young and growing in you.

Do not ask what is the remedy for internal considering please. You have got to study it in yourselves and notice what harm it does you and from that gain a real desire to free

yourself from it. You have got to see it first in yourself and then you have to take it seriously, in conjunction with all the other things that you are told in this Work to practise. For the whole Work is necessary. The application of all the parts of the Work is necessary, for the whole Work is a living organism.

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Birdlip, March 8, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

III

Last time we spoke of the necessity for considering externally in the Work. External considering must begin from the start of the Work, as far as a person is capable of it. A person who is self-centered--that is, who only thinks of himself or herself and of others only in reference to himself or herself--cannot go far. Such a person works only along the first line of Work, the line of Work on oneself, and that only to a very limited extent. The second line of Work has to do with other people and one's attitude to them. This demands work on oneself also. It does not mean merely that you must endure the unpleasant manifestations of others--and remember that they have to endure yours--but it means rather *the practice of external considering in general*.

Everyone has a more or less fixed way of taking other people, due to attitudes and buffers. We see others through our attitudes and buffers. In general we do not like other people. Instinctively we are hostile. I remember G. once saying that when we pass someone in a lane we tend to tense our muscles. You know that it has been said that we should not pretend we like other people, but try to work on dislike. Dislike grows very early. You cannot externally consider another person, if you nourish dislike only. Everyone splits easily into like and dislike, and in relationships the dislikes must not be allowed to grow mechanically. By self-observation we notice we have two memories for a person. When we are negative we remember only unpleasant things: when not negative we forget them. We have some idea of what fair treatment means in regard to outer behaviour. But we have to be fair *in ourselves* to others and this really is work on oneself that takes the form of external considering. A cluster of unpleasant thoughts and feelings about another person that you have allowed to enter consciousness *willingly* can begin to grow. It is both for the sake of yourself and the other person that something must be done--that is, that you must work on yourself to neutralize, as it were, this unpleasant and powerful material in you. All your intelligence and sincerity and work-memory will be required probably to neutralize this poison, so that you can once more treat the other person fairly inside yourself. You will have to put yourself in the other person's place. You will have to drop all self-justifying, and above all you will have to remember what you have observed in yourself, and what you are like, before you criticize so easily this other person.

On the other hand, you need not do this. You can simply *internally consider*. You can make accounts--saying to yourself that the other person is wrong, that you have not been properly treated, that you are owed that the other person is indebted to you--that is, in debt to you. All this is the basis of so many relationships in life. The basis is internal considering. Have you also noticed that in a relationship between two people, one of them usually externally considers a little more and the other often only internally considers and complains about everything?

In the Work, external considering must go more deeply than in life. It really belongs to the purification of the Emotional Centre. One of the great objects of this Work is to awaken the Emotional Centre which is drugged with negative emotions and all the small emotions of self, of vanity of self-conceit, etc. External considering (in the Work-sense) requires *conscious effort*, whereas internal considering is mechanical -that is, it requires no effort but goes on by itself and grows by itself just as do negative emotions. In the Work, external considering does not spring from life-motives. That is why it requires conscious effort. You have to consider people whom, in life, you would probably not for a moment think of considering. It is this kind of external considering that can change the level of being. Let us take a person who practises external considering in life-for example, a head-waiter. He is perhaps very clever. He notices what people like, what their peculiarities are, what they expect from him, what forms of irritation they have, what food they prefer, and so on. He panders to all this. Like St. Paul he is "all things to all men" but not from the same motives. He is intelligent enough to adapt himself to people's requirements. He puts himself out for the sake of others. He is tactful, observant, he effaces himself, and so on. But he does all this because he is playing a game. And he is quite right. He is intelligent. But in the Work the case is different. External considering from a life point of view is not the same as external considering from a Work point of view. At the same time, a person who knows what external considering means in life and who is trained in studying the requirements of other people may perhaps learn better what external considering means in the Work.

What I want you to see to-night is that the kind of external considering done by the waiter is not the same as that which becomes eventually necessary for everyone in the Work. You come to the necessity and to the meaning of external considering in the Work from a different side which is certainly connected with yourself and your self-interest, but not in the same way. Our object is to try to awaken, not to be so identified with everything, not to be slaves to useless negative states and blank minds, and so on. If we continually make accounts against one another, by privately despising, by wrong talking, by psychologically murdering others and so on, all work on oneself is spoiled. In the process of awaking from sleep, one thing hangs on another thing. One leg cannot get out of bed. The whole of you must get out of bed, if you want to stand upright. After a time in the Work you come to that point of sincerity with yourself in which you realize that you simply cannot allow yourself to be in some particular state that you observe you are in. It is then that you will begin to see why you must externally consider-that is, that you must get things right *in yourself* with regard to other people. So you will see from this brief note that external considering, in the Work, is not something superficial, but something very deep. At first you must practise external considering quite externally, so to speak, but notice the quality of it. The more sincere it is, the better the quality. The more superficial and pretended, the worse the quality. All efforts in the Work, as has been often said, depend for their results on their quality. I suggest that for practical work each of you decides to externally consider a particular person during this next week. Observe your mechanical reactions to this person. Observe your mechanical criticisms. Observe where you feel superior. Try to find in yourself the same things that you complain of in the other person. Think how you would like the other person to think of you as you think of him or her. Put yourself in the other person's place. Try to see where the trouble lies in yourself

as well as in the other person. Try not to identify. Notice your inner talking and what it is up to. Keep awake to what you are doing, which will be your aim for a week. Remember it every day on getting up. Think of it at night-where you failed, why you failed, where you began to internally consider instead of to externally consider. Then you will see better the meaning of externally considering and how it can change being.

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Birdlip, March 15, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

IV

When you feel that some one has not behaved rightly to you, you feel that you have not been estimated at your proper value. For example, to feel insulted is to feel that you are not estimated at your proper value. So people often say, when insulted: "Do you know who I am?" or something like that. They mean that they have a certain valuation of themselves, so they say: "Do you know who I am?" meaning that if the other person did know, he would not dare to behave as he does. Of course, if you have little or no picture of yourself as being valuable, you will not be so easily upset. A high estimate of yourself naturally will make it more easy for you to feel that others do not estimate you at your proper value. So you will internally consider more easily. A person may even be so pre-occupied with the question of others treating him rightly, and with suspicions about whether others are laughing at him that his whole life may be said to be involved in internal considering. Or again, some persons may value themselves above others because of sufferings. People cling to their own suffering and come to regard themselves as worthy of special evaluation because they have had all kinds of hardships, miseries and sufferings. They are offended if another person begins to talk of his own suffering. They feel that the other person does not consider them enough and that he is selfish. It is difficult for them to realize that other people also have sufferings. Nor do they realize that to see selfishness in others is to see the reflection of one's own selfishness, for the more requirements you make from others, the more selfish will others appear to you.

What is it that causes us to begin to internally consider? Let us ask the question: "At what point, or where, do you start making accounts?" You start when you feel you are not estimated aright, when you feel you are undervalued. The waiter does not come when called. The shop-assistant serves another person first. Perhaps people do not look at you enough in the street, or, let us say, pay sufficient attention in general. Or one person seems persistently to ignore you. Or perhaps you hear what someone said of you: that is nearly always unpleasant. There are a thousand and one possible examples, less, and more, serious. Small incidents upset us easily - the waiter, the shop-assistant. These form short accounts and may eventually become a habit. But we have all sorts of long-standing accounts against others, some of them stored up in the past, unfortunately for ourselves. They all begin with this mysterious question of *one's own valuation of oneself*. A person with some self-observation might well exclaim: "What is this thing in me that is offended at this moment and has already begun to make accounts? Look, I can observe it at work in me collecting materials and beginning to remember unpleasant things and to find words and phrases to use against the other person so as to make him feel that he is underestimated by me - in fact, to make him realize he is so much dirt. Is it a picture of myself? Is it imaginary 'I'? Is it false personality? or what is it that is at the bottom of it all?" The answer is that what is at the bottom of it all is *where you identify with yourself*. All forms of internal considering, of which making accounts against another person is one form, belong to identifying. The Work says that we must study identifying down to

its very roots. A man is only offended *where he is identified with himself*. And the Work also says that the study of identifying must begin with a study of where you are *identified with yourself*. It is here that you can be upset, hurt, offended, insulted. The being identified with oneself comes first, being upset and offended comes second, making inner accounts comes third.

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INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

V

Some people find it difficult to understand what external considering means and others to understand what internal considering means. In this Work external considering must be done and internal considering stopped. To externally consider another person it is first necessary to put yourself in the other person's position. To do this you must think of yourself as being this other person, having to do the same things, having the same difficulties, the same handicaps, the same life. Now if you will begin to think of this preliminary step, you can hardly say that external considering has anything to do with being indifferent. To put yourself in another person's situation calls upon your whole understanding. It requires a directed effort of the mind and feelings and not merely -once but time and again. And you will certainly be quite incapable of doing this if you are always pre-occupied with your own personal problems and woes and with the way you are being treated - that is, if you are always taking your life from the standpoint of internal considering.

I remember the case of a man who was always internally considering, always suffering, who wrote on his wife's tombstone: "From your heartbroken husband." You see, even then he could only think of himself, of his own suffering. Now if you begin to externally consider another person over a considerable period, you must again and again put yourself in the other person's place. In this way you become more conscious. The object of the Work is to become more conscious. Self-observation makes you more conscious of yourself: external considering makes you more conscious also of others. Through externally considering, things you were not conscious of before are revealed to you. Let us take a simple example of revelations of this kind: you put yourself in another person's position and after a time you realize that you expect this person to do things you would not think of doing yourself - for example, you expect this person perhaps to put up with conditions that you would not put up with for a moment. Do you see that you have gained in consciousness? Now if you have a revelation of this kind it means that you are really beginning to externally consider, to understand what it means to put yourself in another person's position.

People who make a great many requirements expect a great deal from others and if they do not get what they expect, they are disappointed and they feel they are owed. That is, they begin to form a great background of internal considering to their lives. This makes them bitter. They feel they have scores to settle. For a person of this kind to externally consider becomes very difficult. But it should not be so difficult for you unless you are crystallized. To realize that you expect the other person to do things you would never think of doing yourself makes a very good starting-point from which to begin to externally consider another person. It is a practical starting-point and a Work starting-point. You realize then that you expect the other person not only to do things you would never think of doing but to be different from you, behave differently, put up with things differently, and so on. Let us suppose you have always compared yourself very favourably with other people and perhaps even are sure that none of the unpleasant things

you notice in others exists in yourself. It will be very surprising, then, to have the revelation that you are unjust and that you expect others in the Work to do what you would not dream of doing yourself. It is always painful to realize that there is really anything wrong with oneself. As was said in an earlier paper, you may often say that you are to blame for something, but if someone agrees with you, it is startling and you feel offended. Yes, we easily *pretend* we are wrong. But to *see* it, direct and unmistakable, in oneself, is *pain*. This is real and so, useful, suffering, for all real suffering purifies the emotions. It only lasts a brief time as real suffering and then gets infected by false personality and changes into some complicated negative state, some sort of unpleasant self-pity or endless self-justifying, which is useless suffering.

Now suppose you have to live with a person called yourself. I once read a story of a man who died and went into the next world where he met numbers of people some of whom he knew and liked and some he knew and disliked. But there was one person there whom he did not know and he could not bear him. Everything he said infuriated and disgusted him - his manner, his habits, his laziness, his insincere way of speaking, his facial expressions - and it seemed to him also that he could see into this man's thoughts and his feelings and all his secrets and, in fact, into all his life. He asked the others who this impossible man was. They answered: "Up here we have very special mirrors which are quite different from those in your world. This man is yourself." Let us suppose, then, that you have to live with a person who is you. Perhaps this is what the other person has to do. Of course, if you have no self-observation you may actually imagine this would be charming and that if everyone were just like you, the world would indeed be a happy place. There are no limits to vanity and self-conceit. Now in putting yourself into another person's position you are also putting yourself into his point of view, into *how* he sees you, and hears you, and experiences you in your daily behaviour. You are seeing yourself through his eyes. If you have no self-observation you cannot do this, because you will simply take yourself for granted as being "quite all right" in everything. But if you have become sufficiently trained in self-observation to have begun to lose your former ideas of yourself and if you already have a collection not only of snapshots but of cabinet-size photographs of yourself in your most typical roles, the case will be quite different. You will be able to see yourself to some extent as the other person sees you and so you will begin to realize practically what the other person's situation is and what some of his or her difficulties are and what it might mean if you had to live with yourself. Of course, the other person must do the same. Some of you may think, on hearing this, that it is quite right to say that the other person should try to see how difficult he or she is. But notice that we are beginning the other way round. It is you who have to see how difficult you are for the other person. Let me tell you that all this is not at all easy to grasp. You may think you know it all already. You may have heard it already, but a life-time at least is needed to see all that it implies.

In the Work, relationship is important. Work relationship is impossible without external considering. In general we must approach one another through the medium of the Work. The Work and its teachings must lie between you and the other person. You must look at one another through the common window of the Work. You must be related through the common valuation of the Work--but quite *practically*--by working. When two people in

the Work quarrel, they have a great deal of work to do. They may not be ready for it, in which case sore places will be made, just as in life. They may refuse to work on themselves or in connection with one another: they then will both internally consider, both think they are owed, both think that the other should apologize. Of course if you do not work on yourself and just live and do nothing extra, the Work cannot become Third Force for you. Third Force is relating force. In this case life will be Third Force and life divides, whereas the Work should unite. Life divides because in life people do not understand one another. They have no common basis, no common language. But in the Work there is a common basis and people can begin to speak a common language and so to understand one another. But ten times more external considering is necessary in the Work than in life - and of quite a different quality, because the Work is the relating force. If two people in the Work quarrel, and are ready to work and wish to, then both of them will do so from themselves - not by meeting and talking it over - but simply as part of the Work itself. Each will put himself in the other's position and each see himself from the other person's viewpoint. External considering is very good work. It is not about whether you were right or the other person. It increases consciousness. It includes the first and second lines of work.

If you base your existence on internal considering, you will end your lives as most people do. Your lives, then, are all one-sided, undealt with, undigested, so many unhappy things just left lying about, and rotting, so to speak, in the past, so many violent or bitter feelings, so many places to which one has become glued down by past identifying. All this is certainly due to not giving oneself the First Conscious Shock, to not letting life fall on the Work in one. I think one can see so often internal considering has spoiled life and what a terrible form of identifying it is. It is really like looking at life the wrong way round. And people who can only internally consider and feel that others should be different, take hold of one another so wrongly that they accumulate between one another, as it were, a mass of heavy, dense, negative material, to which they get fastened, and which they will not give up. But external considering is utterly different. It cleanses you. It frees you. It joins together what is missing by making you see the other side and realize the effect of what you do. It cancels all the feeling of being owed by bringing together the debit and credit sides of the accounts. An hour of external considering will free you from the effects of weeks of internal considering. And the more you can see yourself by observation, at the moment, and the more you can see the kind of person you have been all your life, the more will you be able to externally consider rightly. But remember that external considering can only begin, in its practical application, with putting yourself in the other person's place, and looking out, as it were, of the other person's mind and consciousness at yourself as he sees you. So do not think that external considering is merely doing something for the other person.

Birdlip, March 27, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

VI

As long as you externally consider another person with a view to trying to change him or her - that is, as long as you think the other person should be different - you are not externally considering, but internally considering. The basis of internal considering is thinking that others should be different, and from this comes "making accounts" against others. It is necessary to understand this point clearly. You feel another person should not treat you as he does, or should not annoy you, or should not be as he is. Are you then making demands or not? Of course you are. Now in real external considering you cannot start from this point. You are starting from the idea that you are right and they are wrong. And because you think you are right and they are wrong, you feel that they owe you something. In what sense do they owe you something? You feel they should correspond to your ideas and because they do not you feel that something is lacking which they should do. So you feel they owe you right behaviour, according to your private standards of what is right and wrong. You see that all this means that you are putting yourself in the position of a judge. You are judging the other person from your own acquired ideas of what that person should be like. This is a source of internal considering in regard to that side of it called "making accounts". In short, you feel the other person owes you something. Now if you start by trying to externally consider another person from the basis of internal considering, from the basis of thinking the other person should be different, your external considering will be nothing but internal considering. You are making no attempt to start from the right basis of external considering, which is putting yourself in the other person's situation. On the contrary, you are starting from your own situation, not from the other person's. And in comparison with the real external considering, this is nothing but a form of hypocrisy and you will probably end only by shrugging your shoulders and saying: "Well, I have done my best for this person and I cannot do more." So you will wash your hands of him in your own feelings of merit and virtue. But I assure you that external considering in the Work-sense is nothing like that. Take an ordinary mechanical man - that is, an ordinary person. He is full of buffers, prejudices, negative attitudes, pictures of himself, vanity, typical gramophone records, and so on. Suppose he attempts, as he is, to externally consider, really to put himself in another person's life, into his situation, into his mind. Do you think he will be able to do so? Of course not. He does not see himself. So how can he see the other person? And if he does not see the other person, how can he put himself in the other person's position? That is why it is said that before you can begin to externally consider in a real way, you must have reached some degree of self-observation and it is only according to your degree of self-observation and self-knowledge that you can externally consider another person. In so far as you know yourself, you will know aright the other person: in so far as you can see yourself you can see others aright. Do you know, each one of you here now, how tiresome, how difficult, how unpleasant, how prejudiced, how exacting, you can be? Have you noticed it? If so, then you are in a better position to externally consider other people, for when you see their faults you will also see your own faults. But as we are

made, looking out from our senses, and not looking in at ourselves, we only see other people's faults and to balance the account takes a life-time of work and insight. We all have pictures of ourselves; we are all, in one way or another, smug. Let me give you the dictionary definition of smug. The word is derived from a German word meaning to dress up; smock, smuggle, and so: "to be scrupulous in keeping up the appearance of respectability, to be absurdly self-satisfied and complacent." One thing is quite certain, and that is that the more sincerely we observe ourselves and what is in us, the less smug we shall be. And from this it follows that we shall be less satisfied to think that we know what the other person should be like. So we shall judge less and in consequence be able to put ourselves in another person's position more easily. You will remember the two examples of praying in the Gospels - the man who prayed thanking God he was not as other men, and the man who beat his breast and said he was a sinner. Which of these two men do you think would best be able to externally consider? And which of those two men would you rather be judged by? There is a saying in the Work that you must have heard more than once, that unless a man begins to realize his own nothingness, he cannot do this Work. He will not jump to catch the rope let down from above to save him. But all this takes time: and we must take the Work, stage by stage, in our gradual understanding of it. No one can outstrip himself - that is, his level of being. As being alters, so does understanding alter. Now external considering is work on being, as was said. Your being is roughly how you take things. In life, people do not really externally consider one another because of their level of being. If people really externally considered one another, war would be impossible. But war is possible because of Man's level of being, which is such that only internally considering, making accounts, thirsting for revenge, and so on, is understood. So you will understand that to externally consider in the Work-sense is to take a step beyond your ordinary level of being. Or, to put it in another way, if you can really externally consider, your level of being will be different.

Now all external considering, in the Work-sense, requires effort, whereas all internal considering is easy, mechanical, self-indulgent. The taste of the two is quite different. A conscious effort has quite a different taste from a mechanical automatic reaction. To be offended is extremely easy. It is a mechanical reaction. Not to be offended, or to *transform* being offended, is difficult. It requires conscious effort. It requires a lot of thought, a lot of inner adjustment, a lot of remembering what one is like oneself, and so on, to transform the first impact of being offended. But that is real work on oneself. Do you wish to belong to the terrific chain of cause and effect which makes up mechanical humanity or do you wish to get out of it? Then, if you do, you must work on your mechanical reactions. If you follow the law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", then you will always remain in the circle of mechanical humanity which leads nowhere. Esotericism brings a new law - the law of non-identifying, the law of self-observation - in fact, the application of the Work itself to daily life. This Work is esoteric Christianity. Christ said: "I bring you a new law". The Work says the same. Do you not see how the Work brings you new laws for behaviour, inner and outer? How then can you say you do not know what it means to think from the Work ideas?

Now you can make it your aim to externally consider a person in the Work or in life, as you like. I would add, you should practise external considering in the Work, because it is easier if the other person is working also, but if this is not possible--or, let us say, not too easy for the moment - then you must do the same in life. Life *can* become your teacher. It becomes your teacher as soon as you begin to work *from yourself*, from a genuine desire to work, which means an evaluation of the Work. Remember the Work can become very cold and distant if you do not keep it alive and you will not keep it alive if you do not love it. To externally consider a person in life is just the same as in the Work, only you will not be helped by the other person necessarily, and so it will be very easy for your attempts at external considering to turn into an increased form of internal considering. You must calculate *second force* - that is, the difficulties. It will be useless, of course, if you start off from a superior position and try to put the other person right. Remember that when you feel offended you are beginning to internally consider. You must be quite passive to the other person and work *on yourself* all the time, if you can, and not get offended. If you are sincere in your aim, you may be able to carry it out. You must *never* find fault, or show that you are finding fault. You must be ready to bear false accusations. And of course you must be ready to bear the unpleasant manifestations of the other person and not lose your temper and begin to chant: "Here am I doing my best to be nice", and so on. Once this begins, then it means you are internally considering. And if you do that, you are starting from a very shallow basis - that is, not from a real, matured aim. And in externally considering a person in life, which means that you must change yourself, you must have already got some idea of what it means to be "all things to all men". You must be able to eat and drink and joke and listen and talk without any trace of the Work being behind you. You *may* have an opportunity to say something, and you may not. That doesn't matter. A person in the Fourth Way of Work must be able to be quite ordinary in life. There must be no kind of superiority, no hinting, no persuasion, no dark remarks. But if you *work* on yourself, when the other person is difficult, *that* will make the other person aware that *you are different*. But you must not show it openly. When life becomes one's teacher, then the highest work is reached. And then you are right in the track of the Fourth Way. But it is difficult - Oh, how difficult! - and requires much and long work on oneself and patient understanding. You must, as it were, be able to suffer all things at the hands of men and yet keep on working. But if you externally consider a person in life, feeling superior, and so feeling a constant judgment and showing it openly, you are not working. That is not the way of the Fourth Way. To become *passive* in the Work sense to another person requires very great inner work, especially so to a person in life. In *some* ways, it is easier than becoming passive to a person in the Work. But you must realize what I mean for yourselves, by experience. You know how in life people are always trying to improve one another by reproofing one another, always finding fault with one another. This is quite useless and leads to all the endless strife in life. But making oneself *passive* to a person and working on oneself therefrom--for to be passive requires constant inner work on yourself - this, I assure you, can effect a change in the other person, because your work makes *room* for him to alter. But if you react mechanically all the time it makes no room for the other person to turn about and change by not reacting, you leave room. In regard to externally considering a person in life, remember that you must really *aim* at doing this. Do you really want to, or not? You must have a genuine matured conscious aim that starts in the light of the Work

and to which you hold on every time you remember yourself and every time you think of what you are doing practically in this Work. Only then will the Work help you. If the basis of your aim is only a life-one, it will not conduct the force of the Work. It may be easier to work from a life-aim. We are told to make friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness. In real relationship *in the Work* this is not enough. It is indeed far from enough. But in externally considering a person *in life*, what belongs to life-aim can enter, if it helps your Work-aim. I will give you an example: if you fear to lose some job, some position, and so on, your life-aim may help your Work-aim to be passive to unpleasant manifestations. This is allowed. But you must know *which is which*, and when genuine Work comes in, and realize what you are doing, and what life-considerations make you do. A different example is when a person may be so placed that his contact with the Work depends on his externally considering people in life. This *can* be done, only it requires intelligence and being passive to criticism. It especially requires the capacity of inner *silence*. Wrong talking will of course create difficulties. That is, a person in this Work, surrounded by people in life who have no magnetic centre, must behave in an ordinary way - he must be silent, not in an obvious or intriguing way, but really internally silent, so that others notice nothing unusual. This will be part of his work. His other work will consist in not reacting mechanically as he always did. We are speaking of those in the Work who are connected by ties with people not in the Work. Now we will speak of those in the Work who wish for a special reason to make relationship with those not in the Work. The whole question is then about magnetic centre. If you feel the Work emotionally, you will find it difficult to make contact with those who cannot feel it. After some conversations you will probably notice that a line of cleavage appears. Do not blame the Work for this fact. The Work guides you to certain people, or not. One has to listen to the Work, as it were, as best one can. You must also remember that the difference between a person who knows something of this Work and a person who does not is very considerable. In fact, a gulf lies between them. Socially you may like someone and be attracted and wish to bring him into the Work, but if there is no magnetic centre and the whole quality of conversation is limited to life, then you will feel that there is, as is actually the case, a gulf. There are quite nice people in life who cannot enter the Work. And this is as it must be. We can only meet through a common understanding, not through external appearances or physical bodies. Let us try to grasp this. A person who is beginning to understand the Work will find it not easy to unite with one who has no magnetic centre. Remember that the possession of magnetic centre is a sign of level of being. Some have it without knowing they have. But in general people of different levels of being do not unite. How can they? Understand that *magnetic centre* is a very big thing, in regard to the sign of a man's being. A man may be clever and a good scientist and so on, but have no sense of anything higher - no feeling of Greater Mind. A man in the highest position in life does not necessarily possess magnetic centre and usually does not. Life is not a standard for estimating a person in the Work valuation, save in regard to Good Householder. Neither Herod nor Pilate was fit for the esoteric teaching of Christ. All that is obvious enough surely. Life-values and Work-values are quite different: a big man in life is not a big man in the Work. You cannot talk to a highly successful man in life of this Work, thinking that he will understand you. I mean, you must never think that high position in life means a high understanding of this Work. In fact as often as not, the case is quite the contrary. This idea takes a long time to sink into people.

Let me add one thing which is of the greatest importance in external considering. You cannot externally consider another person unless you can break him or her up into different 'I's. And you cannot do this unless you can see different 'I's in yourself. If you always think of yourself as 'I' then you will also always think of others as having one single permanent 'I'. Can you yet think of different 'I's in yourself and not say 'I' to everything in you? Then you will, in the same degree, be able to see different 'I's in another person. You will see his good and his bad 'I's. This will help you to externally consider the other person.

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Birdlip, April 3, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

VII-ON BEING PASSIVE (1)

It was said last time, in connection with external considering, that it is necessary to be *passive* to another person. To-day we will begin to speak of the Work-meaning of *being passive*. What is the central theme of the Work in regard to its practical side-that is, in regard to work on oneself? And in this connection what does inner change mean? Practical work on oneself is directed towards making something passive in oneself which is at present active, and something active which is at present passive. Personality which is active must become passive so that essence which is passive can become active. This is the central idea of practical work on oneself. The Work is a *second* education. First of all life must develop personality so that it surrounds essence. This is the first education. Then, if a man wishes to go further in his development personality must become passive so that essence can grow and become active. So you see that a *reversal* must gradually take place. First of all, a child is born with only essence which is active. Then life forms personality round essence, and personality is active. This situation will remain unchanged unless a man begins to work on himself. If he does so, personality will gradually become passive and essence active. There are thus three possible orientations: first, in the child, essence active, second, in the adult, personality active, and third, in the case of a man who works on himself, personality passive and essence active. The whole aim of the Work is to make *acquired* personality passive. In the Work sense to become passive means inner work on personality. It means eventually separation from personality. By the action of life there has been formed in every one of you a very complex built-up thing called personality. This has been formed by imitation, by custom, by the influence of the period you grew up in, by example, by fantasies derived from novels, from drama, from the film, by attraction, hero-worship, and by a thousand and one other influences acting upon you from the outside and entering through the external senses, from outer life. All this forms the acquired side of you and is called, in general, the personality. Essence is what you are born with: personality is what you acquire. And what you are born with, or as, is changed by all these things that you acquire and accept and consent to and believe in and identify with. A new person therefore grows around the original essence. This is personality. And all this *must* take place because essence by itself cannot grow beyond a limited point. A man cannot grow straight up from essence. This is one of the strange things the Work teaches.

Now in consequence of the formation of personality your centre of gravity of consciousness shifts from essence (in childhood) outwards into the personality acquired from the particular circumstances you are brought up in and the particular things that have interested you on the one side or have attracted your vanity on the other side. In this way, you, as it were, lose your original basis and become something *acquired*, something invented. Your feeling of 'I' passes outwards into all sorts of feelings derived from life. A man feels no real inner stability when he derives his feeling of himself from life. That is, he is always afraid that something may happen to him, or to his fortune, or to his position,

or his reputation. This is due to his identifying with everything that life has formed in him and this means that he only feels himself through personality. But other feelings of oneself are possible that are not derived from life and personality, and these feelings give a man a sense of stability that nothing outside him can take away. And it is from these feelings that a man begins to feel himself free, because they depend on nothing outside him, and so cannot be taken away from him. Such a man begins to be no longer so much a slave to outer things.

Now let us say that as a boy you get into the first team at school. Then you begin to feel yourself outwardly through this and you wear a cap that gives you this feeling. You become a man in the first team and this is now your greatest feeling of 'I'. Then you are thrown out of the team. What a tragedy! All this is necessary in regard to the first education. So you become this or you become that, in life, and you should and must. You have this or that success or triumph and so on, and you should. It is a sort of training. It is all necessary at first. All this forms feelings of yourself in personality, which, roughly speaking, lives by comparison with others. That is, you feel a loss of yourself in the presence of a person who wears a more distinguished cap and so on. I repeat, all this is necessary, but it gives a wrong centre of gravity. Let us suppose that you are a great actor or a great boxer. You will not easily listen to praise of another actor or boxer. Why? Because your feeling of 'I' is derived from personality and you will feel a loss of 'I', a loss of the very feeling of yourself, if someone else surpasses you. But all this is to train you in illusions about 'I'. For if you have any trace of real feeling of 'I', this is impossible. Real 'I' does not exist through *comparison*. Therefore you will understand that when it is said that personality roughly lives by comparison, you only have to study yourself or others in this light for a short time to see how easily everyone is upset or chagrined, and how brittle this feeling of 'I' is, in which people keep on trying to live - that is, in the feeling of 'I' derived from some aspect of personality.

Now let us keep for the time being to the great formulation of the Work concerning personality and essence. The third or neutralizing force of life makes, and must make, personality active and essence passive. So the Work says that if you come into the third force of the Work, which opposes life, personality must gradually become passive to let essence develop. All *individual* evolution, all real inner development of yourself, depends upon a *growth of essence*. If you are full of false feelings of 'I', of invented ideas of yourself, then there can be no growth of essence. Real inner change is a development of essence - that is, of what is the most real and the deepest part of you. For this to take place, personality must gradually become passive. This is the real meaning of *being passive* in the Work. It is becoming passive to personality in yourself. So when it is said that in real external considering you must be passive, the meaning is that you must become passive *to the reactions of your personality*. And this requires the most conscious and most concentrated work on oneself. That is, it requires a very active conscious inner state. And we must not suppose we are capable of reaching this state in a moment.

Owing to the formation of personality, you all have typical, habitual ways of reacting to circumstances and events, and to other people. If you cannot observe your typical reactions, your continual mechanical ways of taking things and people, your usual

stereotyped behaviour, your ever-recurring unpleasant manifestations, your vexations and strictures, etc. then of course you have no idea that you even have an acquired *personality*. You take yourself for granted - as a kind of solid virtuous lump. But, although we take ourselves for granted so easily, we are not one and the same person at different moments, as we suppose. We are not solid. If we saw clearly that we are not one and the same solid person always, we would not take ourselves for granted as we do. Something of our vanity and self-conceit which binds personality together would begin to leave us. Remember that personality is many. It is composed of many different and contradictory 'I's that have been acquired. And it also contains all sorts of other things about which the Work often speaks: negative attitudes, buffers, pictures of oneself, mechanical associations, songs, gramophone records, typical forms of imagination, negative states, characteristic forms of lying, and, in short, all that the practical side of this Work teaches us to notice and observe in ourselves throughout life. Once the Work begins to act on a person genuinely, all these forms of feeling oneself, all these feelings of 'I' derived from personality, begin to dissolve away. But the action of the Work in this respect is very gradual, because the Work acts on people very gently and only in reference to what each of us can stand. When you really begin to see something in yourself, then it means that you can stand it. If you cannot see any 'I's it means that you are not ready. To see oneself as one really is would be intolerable. So the action of the Work is gradual. You may begin to see something - some 'I' - that you do not, let us say, quite like, but you will not be freed from it until you either see or know some better 'I' and prefer it, or until you can be freed from this 'I' without danger to yourself. But we will speak of this in the next paper.

Now let us come back to the meaning of *being passive*. In the full sense it means being passive to the personality, and this, in turn, means being passive to oneself. Can you be passive to your mechanically arising objections for even five minutes? Well, I advise you to observe how your personality reacts every moment to everyone and everything. It is this constant mechanical reaction that must be worked on in order to begin to be passive to oneself. And this requires a constant conscious state of self-observation. No one can do it as yet for long. But you can practise being passive in this sense for a short time, say, five minutes. Notice when you begin to object inside - notice what reactions arise in you - and try to be passive *to them*, not to the people who cause them to arise. Is this clear? You must make yourself passive to your own reactions, not to the people you are reacting to. To do this you must be awake inside yourself and capable of seeing different 'I's in you and what they want to say or how they want to act at the moment.

Let us try to get all this quite clear. Do you all understand that you have *acquired* many things in yourselves that you take as *you*? Can you agree that by education, imitation, example, what you were taught, and so on, you have all sorts of ideas, ambitions, estimations, values, judgments, expectations, ways of showing like and dislike, characteristic ways of speaking, and, in short, many typical *reactions* to life? And is it too much to say that all these built-up acquired reactions in you are usually taken by you as *yourself*? You think them necessary, do you not, or natural, because you think that they are *you*. But the real *you*, or rather, the real 'I' in you, is *not* all these things that you keep holding on to and taking as *yourself*. If you will start from this simple basis you will

begin to understand what it means to be *passive* - that is, passive to yourself - or rather, passive to what you always have been taking as *yourself*. To be passive to oneself, one must not take oneself for granted. There is no such thing as 'I' in you. When a person, totally identified with his acquired personality, says, for example, "I think this," "I think that," the Work answer is "Which 'I' is speaking?" Do you see how powerful this idea is? And can you begin to apply the power of this Work-idea to yourself? Certainly not, if you do not begin to break yourself up into different 'I's. If you take yourself for granted as a solid, then there is no breaking up of yourself and so no change is possible. The word 'I' will come out of your mouth at every moment, but you will not see that it is a different 'I' speaking at every moment. One 'I' will shout, another 'I' will speak tenderly, and so on. Yet you do not see that each 'I' is utterly different. It is a great shock to self-conceit to realize that there is no such person as 'I'. But unless this begins to dawn on you, you will never be able to begin to be passive to yourself. You cannot begin to be passive to yourself unless you see yourself as many different people by inner observation and learn about your different 'I's and know especially which 'I's in you you must never allow to take full charge of you. Next time we will speak of *identifying with oneself* more fully, and the different forms of practising inner separation. Let me say here that 'I's that value this Work must never be allowed to lose their authority in you. Notice the 'I's you are consorting with. Do not keep company with wrong people in you. Remember you are a city, with slums and dangerous streets, and also better streets and good citizens. Remember you are a house full of servants under no control. Has not our first education partly to do with not going with wrong people outside us? Our second education is not to go with wrong 'I's inside us. Our first education is *external*: our second education is *internal*. Life does not give us the second education. Only esoteric teaching gives us the second education-that is, for those who are looking for something different from life.

Birdlip, May 15, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

XI-ON BEING PASSIVE (5)

We continue to-day to speak on the subject of non-identifying with oneself. I remind you again that people take this thing called oneself for granted, and also take it not only as one thing but allow it to say 'I' to everything it does or thinks or feels.

We spoke last time of identifying with oneself from the standpoint of centres and began with the Intellectual Centre. When you are first taught about self-observation, you are told to try to observe the work of the different centres so as to see the three people in you corresponding to them. The activities of the Intellectual Centre are very many. Last time something was said about *opinions* and *thoughts* which belong to the Intellectual Centre. A man usually identifies himself completely with his opinions, which are borrowed from others, from the papers, etc. Then we spoke of identifying with our thoughts. Our thoughts are not *visible* to other people, nor to ourselves. But they are quite definite things, composed of definite substances. We can be *more*, or *less*, conscious of our thoughts. Now when you *observe* a thought, you are not identified with it. What does that mean? It means that unless you observe the Intellectual Centre and what is going on in it you tend to take its activities for granted. You will *believe your thoughts* or take them for granted. You identify with them. You give them the quality of truth and either say: "I think" or, more internally, you take the thoughts as you. Then they have power over you and exert their influence upon you. An unpleasant thought, a dreary, heavy thought, a suspicious thought, a pessimistic thought, an evil thought, and so on - all these thoughts *become you*: and so you *are* them, through identifying with them. But *you* are *not* your thoughts. *Any* thought can enter the mind. All sorts of hopeless, bad, useless, stupid, formless and imbecile thoughts can enter the mind. And if you say 'I' to them all, where will *you* be? You will say 'yes' to them all. You will consent to them. You will, in short, be identified with them, because all the time you will be saying 'I' to them and believing that 'I' is thinking them and that they are *your* thoughts. But, as I said, any thoughts can enter the mind, just as any people can come into your house. Very few of our thoughts are worth following and in order to begin to think rightly, nearly all the thoughts that casually come into the mind have to be rejected as useless or worse. A person may indeed have very dangerous thoughts, especially when he accepts them as if they were his own. He is so naive as to believe that all thoughts coming into his mind are his own and that he himself thought them. And so he says 'I' to them, not knowing any better. But if he begins to understand that he must observe his thoughts, he will soon have quite a different viewpoint.

I remember that many years ago when Mrs. Nicoll and I left the Institute in France and went to Scotland to my grandfather's house, I spent many months looking through the theological books in my grandfather's library, written by various Scotch divines. They

were all, of course, purely formatory. They were all about matters of doctrine and about the letter of the law and they indulged in all sorts of hairsplitting arguments. But one of them struck me. The writer said that people must remember that the devil sent many thoughts into our minds and that we must never think that they are our own thoughts. He explained this idea at some length and even often emphasized the phrase: "Our thoughts are not our own." Here was a man beginning to understand *something psychological* and reading him was like a breath of living air, amongst all those dead and terrible volumes, in which there was no trace of understanding, and nothing was said on the psychological level, and everything was taken on the literal level - on the level of *stone*. This writer said that we are not responsible for our thoughts but responsible for our thinking. You can think a thought, or not. A thought enters the mind and seeks to attract you. If it does, you begin to "think it" - that is, think from it. You begin to enlarge this thought, by paying attention to it and thinking from it, until it grows in all directions, and forms, as it were, a little tree of thought in you, that bears fruit, and seeds other similar thoughts. This is clear enough in the case of suspicious thoughts.

You understand that a *thought* and *thinking* are not the same. Let us suppose that the thought enters your mind that Mr. X is lying. This is only a thought. You probably say to yourself: "I must think about that." But if you believe the thought at once you identify with it. Your thought has now transformed Mr. X. into a liar. What thoughts we identify with change things very much. For instance, some people habitually identify with a gloomy, tortuous, mistrustful class of thoughts. They like thoughts of this shape and colour. So they accept such thoughts and reject others. These thoughts alter things for them, like dark glasses. Now they are identified with these thoughts so that they cannot see them. They *are* these thoughts so they cannot observe them and see they are certain kinds of thoughts and that all sorts of other thoughts exist, with quite different shapes and colours. A man can have any kind of thoughts. Any thoughts can come into a man. In the Gospels it is pointed out that it is not what comes into a man that defiles him but what comes *out of a man*. Any sort of thought can enter the mind, but whether you identify with it and act from it - or rather, re-act - is another question. If you identify with a thought you say 'I' to it and you believe it. So you will *think* from it or *act* from it. How you think and how you act is what comes *out of you*. The thought that enters the mind is what goes *into a man*. What he thinks and does from this thought is what comes *out of him*. A thought that is a lie, a wrong thought, wrongly joined together, a false thought, a depressing thought, a thought that takes hold of one thing and ignores everything else, or that kind of thought that can only deny and contradict, etc. - if a person identifies with such thoughts, he will think and act from them. His mind will be a mess. The ideas of this Work are to build the mind up in the right order so that everything can be related aright. In the centre of the mind stands the Ray of Creation - that is, the *Scale of Being*. From the highest to the lowest all things fall into their places. But unless the mind is changed by the Work, it continues to think that all its thoughts are real and true. The mind is then like a tent lying in a heap on the ground without a central upright pole. All its parts are touching each other wrongly. They are not stretched out. By means of the training of the Work and learning to think from what it teaches, a man begins to be able to distinguish between right and wrong thinking. He begins to learn how to think on the right scale, and

how not to mix scales, and so on. All this helps him not to identify with all his thoughts. It gives a centre of gravity to his thinking.

This Work is to make a man think aright. That is why it is so important to try to take in what this Work teaches. You know that in learning, say, Chemistry, or, if you like, a foreign language, it is very important to listen to what is taught you, and to arrange it in your mind, and think about what is being taught you. Many people never think of what they are being taught. But in the Work, it is necessary. Why is it necessary? Because it builds up a new system of thought and of thinking in your minds. Actually, it makes your minds begin to work in the right way-so that they can really begin to think.

Now let me emphasize that a *thought*, and *thinking* a thought, are not the same. A thought may enter your mind, but you may or may not *think* it. And even if you *think* it, you need not necessarily *identify* with it. But there are many different kinds of thoughts, higher and lower, big and little, that enter the mind, and this belongs to later teaching. What it is necessary to realize at present is that thoughts are of every possible kind and that they are not yours, but that you make them yours by identifying with them. And if you do so, then they can pull you in any direction. There is a science of thought. This Work, with all its ideas and teaching, and instructions, has to do with a right *science of thought and thinking*. For that reason all of you who have heard the Work for some years should know what it means to *find fault with your thoughts and with your thinking*, and should be able to see wrong thoughts and inadequate and unrelated thinking, poor thoughts, negative thoughts, useless thoughts, lying thoughts, and so on. The first change demanded in this Work, as in the Gospels, is *change of mind*. But for "*change of mind*" to take place, you must begin *to think from this Work* and what it teaches. Then later, perhaps, you can begin *to act from the Work*. But first of all a new way of thinking is necessary. Now in this paper we are speaking of what the Work teaches. It says that any thoughts can enter your minds, and they are not your thoughts. It says you can think them or not. And it says you can identify with them or not. When you hear this, as a part of the teaching of the Work, and apply it by observing yourself in Intellectual Centre, you will see that it is quite true. When you realize this, you will be *thinking in a new way* about yourself.

If you can realize practically -that is, by experience -that you can be passive to your thoughts by non-identifying with them, you have already reached a definite stage of work on the Intellectual Centre. But if you take yourself as *one* you will never get to this point. You will remain stuck in the illusion that all your thoughts as well as all your feelings and moods are *you* or rather "I myself". You will have no insight into the enormous inner world of height and depth containing thousands of inhabitants, good and bad, that you take for granted as one person, which you regard as yourself, and in *the customary state of sleep* say 'I' to at every moment. Everything that takes place in yourself you will call 'I'. So you will never move from the position you are in, because you take *yourself as one*, and so you will never understand what it means to become *passive to yourself*.

In the above paper we have been speaking of practical work that leads to becoming passive to *thoughts*. This belongs to intimate work on the *Intellectual Centre*. This is the subject of the paper. The paper is about long practical work on non-identifying with thoughts.

Birdlip, May 22, 1943

INTERNAL CONSIDERING AND EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

XII-ON 'BEING PASSIVE' (6)

Last time we spoke of the necessity in the Work that a man should be able to find fault with his thoughts and not identify with them. Tonight we speak of the necessity of finding fault with our emotions. The activities of the Emotional Centre are far more difficult to become passive to than the activities of the Intellectual Centre. A man can *think differently* more easily than he can *feel differently*. It is quite possible to become passive to many thoughts that one has been accustomed to follow and identify with, but it is not the same in regard to the sphere of the emotions and feelings. The reason is that we are identified with our feelings far more than with our thoughts. Our feelings, our emotions, our moods, grip us. Notice yourself, when you are vexed. Is it easy to non-identify with this usual daily emotional state? You may smile and say cheerful things and pretend you are all right, but inside you are held as if in a vice. Although one side of you may not want to be vexed, yet some other side insists on being so. Or let us say that something belonging to the self-importance, to the vanity, is touched - is it easy to cease being identified with it? Is it easy not to be offended? One reason is that the emotions are very quick. They work with a very "quick" energy, a far quicker energy than that used in ordinary thoughts. Another reason is that we rarely look at our emotions. We do not observe them because we take them for granted. Our emotional life is a very poor thing. But we do not notice how poor and unpleasant and mean it is. If we did, we would begin to dislike it. We would begin to dislike our usual emotional states - even begin to hate them. But it takes some considerable time before we reach this stage of consciousness. It is scarcely too much to say that we are not really conscious of our usual daily emotions, which are practically always negative, mean, jealous, and paltry - or, in short, unpleasant. Our love of unpleasant emotions is extraordinary and we like very much not only to communicate our unpleasant emotions to others and infect them but to *hear* about unpleasant things, scandal, and so on. *We do not know what we are doing. We do it all in sleep.* We cannot see our emotions because we are so identified with them. If we could see plainly our usual emotions we would be horrified. But fortunately we are not able to see them, simply because we could not endure it. It would drive us mad to see the quality of our emotional life. We all have noble pictures of ourselves. And the Work never allows us to see what we cannot bear. Its action is very slow, very gradual, very gentle. But we can see the *results* of our emotions and this is the starting-point. We can see that we hurt people, for example. But even if we realize this, it may take us years of self-observation before we realize that we have unpleasant, treacherous or nasty emotions, which cause others to be hurt, and that it is our fault. You must understand that *awakening* is a very long process and a painful one. Awakening means becoming more and more *conscious of oneself* - of what one is really like. In the emotional sphere this is very difficult. How often do people imagine that they have done their best for others, when, in actual fact, they have done nothing but express their unpleasantest, most stinging and harmful, and often nastiest emotions, of which they should really be

ashamed. In fact, expressing unpleasant emotions is what in life is so often called "being sincere" or "trying to help", and so on. People actually think it is a kindness to say all sorts of unpleasant and wretched things to one another and they imagine that if they smile sweetly they are exercising charity and goodwill. That is the trouble in regard to our emotional states. We are not charitable nor have we goodwill, and one of the first things is to realize this to the very bottom and hate it. We love ourselves in everything. We love everything that gratifies our vanity and so we do not love our neighbours unless they flatter us and we feel that we dispense their lives. And even though we may have better 'I's in us that can understand other people more and even care for them, even if they do not flatter us, yet the smaller, meaner 'I's belonging to the self-love, the self-interest and the self-conceit, usually prove to be far stronger -save perhaps after a long interval of time of self-observation, or when they are rendered quiescent by the exhaustion of severe illness which renders the personality passive. On the point of death people wish only that others should forgive them. That is because they are no longer in small 'I's. But this humiliation can *gradually* take place by the action of the Work -that is, through increasing consciousness of what one really is like -by means of long and patient self-observation and all the inner pain of realizing that life cannot be as it was in our imagination.

Now let us sketch the person who is full of vanity, self-merit, self-admiration, self-love, self-estimation, self-worthiness, self-conceit, self-importance self-esteem, self-excitement, and so on. This person is very identified with himself or herself. This person is *rich* -"the rich man" (or the rich woman). Such people have no idea that they *cannot do*. This idea would startle them. They also have no notion that they *do not know*. They are sure they know best. They feel depressed only when their vanity meets with a check, or no doubt they feel furious. But they cannot see themselves. They may be very kind so long as they are gratified with thanks and praise. They help the poor, they give money to those in distress, provided they get proper recognition and feel they are properly treated. Such people may be very useful in mechanical life, but in the Work, which is under a *reverse sign* from life, they may find themselves at a loss. I remember many years ago that people of this kind who were in the Work decided to get together and make the Work "really go". They felt that it was all too slow and that they could rapidly make it a great success and they no doubt pictured themselves sitting on the platform at some great meeting at the Albert Hall or some such place bowing to thousands of people. They felt that out of their "richness" - I am speaking psychologically -they could enlarge the Work. But it is out of a man's "poorness" that the Work grows. It is not from the rich personality that the Work grows in a man but from the starved and real essence. This is why the Work *reverses everything*, and makes the active passive and the passive active. Do any of you really imagine that if this Work were a great success in life and were broadcast night and day it could retain any inner secret force and meaning? I advise you to think out this for yourselves. For my own part, I realized very early that this Work could never be a success in life and that it could never be written about openly, save indirectly. And if you think deeply you will see why this must be so -that is, if you think from the idea of active and passive signs, in regard to personality and essence.

Now let us take the question of becoming passive to *likes* and *dislikes*. This is part of the Work on Emotional Centre, in regard to the general teaching of becoming passive to the active "oneself" that takes charge of things and controls us. Try to observe your likes and dislikes and how you waste yourselves in silly likes and dislikes. There is an exercise in the Work to this effect: "Try for a time to like what you dislike and dislike what you like." There is a similar exercise in regard to the Intellectual Centre which I should have mentioned before-namely, "Try to observe what opinions you side with and speak in favour of the other side." Being identified with one's mechanical liking and disliking holds a person down to *emotional habits*. It so often happens that you find that what you dislike you can easily like and vice versa. Our mechanical likes and dislikes are based on very little. They change every moment. Yet we attach so much importance to them. And often in the Work you find that people you disliked you begin to like. This is a sign that you are changing. But you cannot change if you identify with every one of your momentary likes and dislikes. One thing can help here-namely, not always *talking* endlessly of your likes and dislikes, and making a fuss about them. Sometimes people's sole form of conversation is about what they like and they do not like. As if they really imagine it is important! No form of talk is more egotistical or exhausting. To practise for a short time, at intervals, being consciously passive to one's mechanical likes and dislikes is very useful, but not always, particularly in those who mechanically are too timid to say what they want. Speaking in general, Work is always against what is *mechanical in you*. If *mechanically* you have not enough likes and dislikes you should have more, and *vice versa*.

Let us now speak of one side of being passive to likes and dislikes. Let us speak of being passive to *associations*. You know that the Work says that we see everything from association. Yet we may have feelings of being in a familiar place and of being in an unfamiliar place at the same time, but these feelings are not in the same part of us. To our small 'I's living in mechanical divisions of centres, things may seem familiar by mere association which when seen from more conscious 'I's become unfamiliar. Thus we sometimes "behold" one another -as for the first time. We see *for a moment without associations*. Impressions then fall beyond the machinery of mechanical personality. Then everything is strange, unfamiliar and vivid. Impressions then fall on essence. We get used to things owing to associations so we no longer *see* each other or indeed anything, but only our associations with which we completely identify. We take another person by our associations. We identify with these associations and so think we see and know the person. Now it is quite possible to observe *associations* at work with which we identify, and so get misled. It is quite possible to observe associations about others especially if one begins to realize *one does not know them*. For instance, people take it for granted that they know each other. This is illusion. We are nearly invisible to one another. But if you think you "know" you will not be able to "see" without mechanical associations. This means that you must start from the realization that you do not know other people, however familiar to you they are. And so also with everything. We do not really *know*. But we are sure we know. Start from the idea that you do not know and have never known. Start, that is, from *ignorance*. This is the "poor" side. And this gives new life because you begin to get new impressions, new viewpoints, new understanding. If impressions fall on essence you see in a new way. Now a "rich" person, very identified

with himself, cannot expect to see things without associations or to get any new impressions falling on essence, which is the growing point of a person. He will live always in associations -in the past. Also an opinionated man, a man or woman convinced that he or she knows right and wrong, a man or woman openly or secretly in love with themselves, and certain of themselves and their virtue, and standpoint, such a man or woman, wholly identified with themselves, will not be able to divide themselves into two. That is, they will not be able to shift their position but must always remain *where* they are and so *what* they are in the Scale of Being. *Where* and *what* are the same in this scale. That is, the level of being *where* a man is, is also *what* he is. If you begin to see yourself passively you begin to see the level of being you are chained down to by the active, self-acting side of you -the side that calls itself "I" and which, in my case, expects to be called "Maurice Nicoll". This side, in everyone, usurps the throne and sits on it. There are endless legends, parables and myths, referring to this wrong psychological situation of man. One has some difficulty in believing that such a thing actually happens to everyone and that everyone has a wrong Ruler on the throne, and that it happened long ago to oneself. One at least thinks one is *master* in one's house. This is precisely not the case. You have no real *master* on the throne of your inner world -that is, in your own psychology. You must understand that if we see everything from past associations we will not be able to see anything in a different way. We may imagine we see another person but it will be from our associations. In this way, we keep one another in the prison of our associations about one another. We have already formed our own opinions about others. So we do not allow others to exist beyond what we think of them by associations. This is a great tragedy. To let people go, as it were, let them be different, depends on *our* letting them go. That is, it depends upon our not trying to keep them to what we imagine they are by our mechanical associations. All mothers and fathers have this difficulty with children. But it applies to all sorts of other relationships in life. Remember that we see one another by our associations, once we become "familiar", as it is called, with each other. What we do not understand is that seeing a person by one's own associations with him or her has nothing to do with what the person really is. Try to see another person *without associations*. That is the beginning of something new. And it so often happens that people have got quite wrong associations with others and never even catch a real glimpse of them. I personally have found in this Work that I "know" others less and less. Certainly I would never say: "I know this person -I have known this person all my life." That is exactly saying, in so many words, that you know nothing save your few associations with the person.

One of the most difficult things in this Work is to go on steadily with it when one's vanity has been hit at. This shows merely how much we do things from vanity, without realizing it. All the explosive, bristling, quarrelling touchiness of life is due to the two emotional giants, Vanity and Pride. Can you stick to a thing when you have been told you are not good at it? Your vanity may be offended, but your pride may help. Anyhow, if you can, then you may be fairly sure that you are not acting from personality entirely but perhaps from something genuine, and deeper, and so more real. Yet it may only be pride, turned *outwards*, which comes to the rescue of offended vanity. At the same time one can stick

to this Work through pride turned *inwards*, and eventually find genuine reasons which have nothing to do with superficial feelings, but spring from a real valuation of the Work itself. This is to reach emotion beyond self-emotion. You must remember that in a fully-developed school of this Work, your Vanity would be hit almost every day, and that many would leave in indignation. At the Institute in France we were told on entering that "personality has scarcely any right to exist in this place." But we merely heard the phrase. We did not realize what it meant -save later. Speaking on a far higher scale, let us recall how many people left Christ because "they were offended in him." This means they were identified emotionally with the vanity of their own worth. To be so is really a nuisance. You will find out why I say this, if you do not know it already. But there is a deeper side to all this -that is, where the Work really brings you up against yourself. Here lies the point where people forget to work and simply feel lost. Here is the place where it is possible to long not to be so identified emotionally with what one is. It is like being stuck to an illusion that you cannot get away from and that can no longer galvanize you. You must, however, begin to realize that you have been "stuck to" an illusion that you have called 'I' and that beyond the illusion you can begin to have real things -that is, the same things, but differently.

Now let us take another aspect of being identified emotionally, which illustrates one of the many difficulties of becoming passive to oneself -to this person called A, to this active Frankenstein-monster that one has been led to make, and which now stalks about in one's little world and takes charge of one, and speaks as if it were 'I' and keeps on singing all sorts of things, grandiloquent and boastful as well as pious and timid. This monster, this *machine* that you are fastened to -what do you think of it? Do you like it? Everyone is attached to his or her machine. Remember the Work teaches that everyone is a machine but that machines are of different kinds -some are loud like Bren guns, or chattering like typewriters, and some are as silent as the electric meter in the hall outside. Now people compare themselves with others. That is, machines compare themselves with machines and identify through comparison with themselves. If you are a noisy machine you perhaps feel you are superior to a quiet machine. And if you are a quiet machine you thank God you are not a noisy machine, and so on. This is one source of identifying emotionally with oneself -that is, it is one source of liking oneself. In the Gospels it is said that a man must come to *hate himself*. This Work uses different language but has the same deep meaning. The Work says a man must become passive to himself. But it is very painful to go against the usual way one has reacted to life. You feel you are losing so much. Yet you are losing nothing real and after a time you begin to feel new forms of living passing into you. You come back to the same scenes, but you are different. It is the same outer world but you take it quite differently. It is the same kind of thing, the same kind of events, but you are related to them quite differently. It is even the same people, but you see and feel them quite differently. In passing from one level of being, and experience, to a new level, there is a gap that is painful. It is like leaving something familiar. If you hold on to the Work, after a time you find that you can once more experience everything fully, but at a different level—that is, in a new way.

Great Amwell House, May 3, 1947

A NOTE ON EXTERNAL CONSIDERING

A quite natural question was asked at one of the sub-groups in connection with the last paper: "Can external considering be entirely divorced from internal considering?"

External considering is always conscious. It is anti-mechanical and so requires conscious effort. Internal considering is always mechanical and so effortless -that is, not conscious, but the work of the machine. To put yourself consciously in the position of another person and see *yourself in him* and *him in yourself* is a conscious act requiring conscious effort. Internal considering goes by itself and is mechanical. Just cheering up a person who is miserable is ordinary human and reasonable behaviour, but if it is a question of the Work -and here the Second Line of Work comes in -you have to listen to the person internally and find the corresponding thing in yourself -that is, to reflect the person in yourself as by a mirror, finding the same thing in yourself and not denying it, and then the other person will undergo a change of state without your saying anything. You do not blame but accept and by doing this you make room for the other person to alter. We have, in the Second Line, to make room for others. This is quite different from helping the person in the ordinary sense, which is simply the blind leading the blind. External considering demands listening internally and finding the same thing in yourself -that is, if you have sufficient self-observation and self-knowledge. You cannot influence others if you do not know the other person in yourself.

External considering is seeing the state of a person and remembering that you were in that state, because in the Work everyone passes through the same states as, say, an older, intelligent person has passed through and remembers. Intelligence means seeing the truth of a thing. As I implied the mere finding in yourself of this state of the other person, without saying anything, will help the other person. External considering is a deep internal act and is based, on an increase of consciousness -that is, on love -for all real love is consciousness of another person's difficulties through finding the same difficulties in yourself. Conscious love is not blind. This makes a new neutralizing force -a Work-force. So in a sense it is done in silence -internally. It can be done, even if you are not in the presence of the other person, by inner work and by always finding the same state in yourself for which you might tend to blame the other person and perhaps nobly try not to, and call it self-sacrifice. This is useless suffering. But when you are externally considering, which is inner, you must not show it outwardly -otherwise it becomes condescension and so goes into False Personality. To imagine *you*, as you are, can help another is always condescension. That is, it is based on the idea that you know better. You can, by sitting in your room and doing this inner work of external considering, this consciousness of your Work-neighbour, actually change the state of that person at a distance, but only by becoming conscious of the same state in yourself and so seeing him or her in yourself. So you climb down, as it were, and do not feel superior.

People will say: "Why is external considering called *external* and internal considering called *internal*, if the act of external considering is internal?" Reflect for a moment, and you will plainly see why. In external considering you put yourself in the position of an external person, an outer object -namely, the other person. In internal considering you think only of yourself. The first is objective, the second is subjective. We do not see people objectively: we see them subjectively -that is, as we imagine or expect them to be. We all do violence to one another by not realizing this. In this sense, people can be mutually destructive of one another.

Now the 4th State of Consciousness is called Objective Consciousness. The four States of Consciousness as given by this Work are:

- 4 State of Objective Consciousness
- 3 State of Self-Remembering
- 2 State of So-called Waking Consciousness
- 1 State of literal Sleep-physical Sleep

These are the 4 States or Levels of Consciousness as given by the Work and we first strive to reach level No. 3. To reach State No. 4 a man must pass through State No. 3. Otherwise he will get nothing, recall nothing of a sudden touching of State No. 4. What can we understand by State No. 4 -that is, the State of Objective Consciousness? The first answer is that in this state we see things as they really are. But this definition does not satisfy the mind. Naturally it cannot, because no one can describe a higher state of consciousness to another person who has never touched it. Unless we have touched the state of Objective Consciousness we cannot apprehend it, just as a man sensible of a three-dimensional world cannot apprehend how things would be in a four, five or six-dimensional world. For instance, he cannot apprehend the idea of his Time-Body -that is, that all his past life is living. But he can begin to understand, however vaguely, what Objective Consciousness *might* mean. Take what was said: "It is seeing what things really are." The best analogy is a mirror. A good mirror faithfully reflects the outer scene. It distorts nothing. It is not jealous. In a word it has no subjectivity. It shows you just what you look like. People say that a mirror does not lie. Now if we could squeeze out our sentimentality, our imaginations based on False Personality, our negative, subjective states, our so-called ideals and a thousand and one other things, including our lovely pictures of ourselves, ingrained hostile attitudes, typical mechanical reactions, buffers, prejudices, vanities, and, in short all the Work teaches us to work against and separate from, then we are approaching the state of seeing things as they are. Now to see another as he or she is demands one absolutely necessary preliminary -namely the necessity of seeing what oneself is like. The more conscious you are of yourself, of what you are like, the more will you see others objectively. For self-knowledge, gained through the practice of self-observation over a long time -in fact, all one's life, after one meets the Work -leads to you yourself becoming more and more objective to yourself. The import of self-observation is to make you an increasing *object* to yourself -that is, to make this thing to which you have been a slave, this thing you have accepted as a whole without question namely, "Yourself" -more and more objective. If I see something in myself it is no longer me -that is, subjective -but becomes an object to me -a thing separate that I can see as

distinct from what I regarded as myself. The part of you that begins to see yourself as an object retreats inwardly until finally it leads to Real 'I' which lies inward and is your real self and is unobservable -that is, it is an experience that cannot be further made objective or analyzed. It becomes close to but not actually "I am that I am". Then a man is master of himself -and is no longer in multiplicity but in unity. This state is very far. But it is quite real, quite true.

1025-1027