

Beelzebub's Tales: Book One

The Side by Side Comparison

Edited by Robin Bloor



KARNAK PRESS

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Dedicated to:

Alfred R Orage,
Gurdjieff's timeless editor

Introduction

Ostensibly, there are two legitimate versions of Gurdjieff's magnum opus, *An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man or Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*: the officially published version that first appeared in 1950, and *The 1931 Manuscript*, which was a completed draft that Gurdjieff updated in the intervening years.

Gurdjieff allowed Alfred Orage to publish and sell *The 1931 Manuscript* to a select group of his American pupils in order to raise much needed funds. One hundred mimeographed copies were made of the manuscript, which were sold for \$10.00 each (equivalent to about \$186 in 2024 dollars). From 1926 to 1930, Orage had been holding group meetings to study and discuss some of the draft chapters of *The Tales* – he was, at the same time, editing and refining the text of *The Tales* with Gurdjieff.

Notes on those meetings were published, in edited form, by C. S. Nott in his book *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil's Journey* and more recently by Book Studio, in a book entitled *Orage's Commentary on Gurdjieff's "Beelzebub's Tales To His Grandson,"* the text of which is taken from the meeting notes taken by Lawrence Morris and Sherman Manchester.

Students of *The Work* who read either or both of those books could be forgiven for assuming that the comments made during those meetings relate to the 1950 published version of *The Tales*. However, they do not, nor do they necessarily refer to the text of *The 1931 Manuscript* published here. Orage likely worked from earlier versions of the text.

The Virtues of The 1931 Manuscript

Readers who enjoy reading *The Tales* usually enjoy reading *The 1931 Manuscript* as well. Despite the differences between the two, the text bears the mark of Gurdjieff. It's permeated with his rhythm and style. In some chapters, the text of the two versions is very similar, while others show clear differences. When reading those different chapters, you often get the impression you're reading a Gurdjieff book you haven't encountered before. The subject matter may be familiar, but the text feels "new."

Our experience suggests that *The 1931 Manuscript* has a similar impact on the reader as the 1950 publication, when read in the first or second ways Gurdjieff recommends, which are:

“at least as you have already become mechanized to read all your contemporary books and newspapers” (the first way),

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The Arousing of Thought

AMONG other convictions formed in my common presence during my responsible, peculiarly composed life, there is one such also—an indubitable conviction—that always and everywhere on the earth, among people of every degree of development of understanding and of every form of manifestation of the factors which engender in their individuality all kinds of ideals, there is acquired the tendency, when beginning anything new, unfailingly to pronounce aloud or, if not aloud, at least mentally, that definite utterance understandable to every even quite illiterate person, which in different epochs has been formulated variously and in our day is formulated in the following words: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and in the name of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

That is why I now, also, setting forth on this venture quite new for me, namely, authorship, begin by pronouncing this utterance and moreover pronounce it not only aloud, but even very distinctly and with a full, as the ancient Toulousites defined it, “wholly-manifested intonation”—of course with that fullness which can arise in my entirety only from data already formed and thoroughly rooted in me for such a manifestation; data which are in general formed in the nature of man, by the way, during his preparatory age, and later, during his responsible life engender in him the ability for the manifestation of the nature and vivifyingness of such an intonation.

Having thus begun, I can now be quite at ease, and should even, according to the notions of religious morality existing among contemporary people, be beyond all doubt assured that everything further in this new venture of mine will now proceed, as is said, “like a pianola.”

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In any case I have begun just thus, and as to how the rest will go I can only say meanwhile, as the blind man once expressed it, “we shall see.”

First and foremost, I shall place my own hand, moreover the right one, which—although at the moment it is slightly injured owing to the misfortune which recently befell me—is nevertheless really my own, and has never once failed me in all my life, on my heart, of course also my own—but on the inconstancy or constancy of this part of all my whole I do not find it necessary here to expatiate—and frankly confess that I myself have personally not the slightest wish to write, but attendant circumstances, quite independent of me, constrain me to do so—and whether these circumstances arose accidentally or were created intentionally by extraneous forces, I myself do not yet know. I know only that these circumstances bid me write not just anything “so-so,” as, for instance, something of the kind for reading oneself to sleep, but weighty and bulky tomes.

However that may be, I begin . . .

But begin with what?

Oh, the devil! Will there indeed be repeated that same exceedingly unpleasant and highly strange sensation which it befell me to experience when about three

WARNING (Instead of a Preface)

EVERYWHERE on the Earth, before beginning anything new, it is customary first of all, to pronounce aloud, or, at least mentally, the following words understandable by every contemporary even quite illiterate person—namely:

“In the name of the Father and of His Son and in the name of that Holy Ghost who, if not understood by all ordinary mortals, is, at any rate, understood and beyond all doubt known by our priests and theologians.

That is why I also, setting out on this for me new venture, namely, authorship, begin with these same words and even pronounce them aloud very distinctly and with the proper intonation, with the intonation, of course, arising from the data crystallized in my common presence in the course of my life, those data, which, in general, engender in a man’s Being, a quality of intonation manifest of the impulses of “faith,” “doubt,” “superstition” and so on.

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.”

Having begun in this way, I ought to be quite assured and to be able to count without any essence anxiety, upon everything further now gliding along, as is said, “on-oil-to-an-Italian-hurdy-gurdy-accompaniment.”

I shall begin by placing my own hand—though somewhat injured through a misfortune which recently befell me, yet nevertheless indeed my own—upon my heart, of course also my own, and frankly confess that, for myself, I have not the slightest wish to write; but unfortunately for me, I am constrained to do so by surrounding circumstances, not dependent on my individuality, which have either arisen accidentally, or perhaps have been intentionally created by an outside force, and which constrain me to write not just “so-so” but “weighty-fat-tomes.”

And so I begin. But how?

Just in this case, experienced people, “who-know-what’s-what,” always talk about “being-on-three-horns-of-a-dilemma.”

Why “Men” Are Not Men

BEELZEBUB sighed deeply and continued to speak as follows:

“After the actualizing on this planet of the ‘Innosoparnian’ process, one year, by objective time-calculation, passed.

“During this period there had gradually been coordinated on this planet also the corresponding processes for the involution and evolution of everything arising there.

“And of course there began gradually to be crystallized in the three-brained beings there the corresponding data for the acquisition of objective Reason.

“In short, on this planet also everything had then already begun to proceed in the usual normal order.

“And therefore, my boy, if the Most High Commission under the supreme direction of the same Archangel Sakaki had not, at the end of a year, gone there again, perhaps all the subsequent misunderstandings connected with the three-brained beings arising on that ill-fated planet might not have occurred.

“This second descent of the Most High Commission to that planet was due to the fact that in spite of the measures they had taken, of which I have told you, there had not yet crystallized in the Reasons of the majority of its sacred members a complete assurance of the impossibility of any undesirable surprise in the future, and they now wished to verify on the spot the results of those measures.

“It was just during this second descent that the Most High Commission decided in any event, if only for the sake of their own reassurance, to actualize certain further special measures, among which was also that measure, the consequences of which have not only gradually turned

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into a stupendous terror for the three-brained beings themselves who arise on this ill-fated planet, but have even become, so to say, a malignant sore for the whole of the great Universe.

“You must know that by the time of this second descent of the Most High Commission, there had already gradually been engendered in them—as is proper to three-brained beings—what is called ‘mechanical instinct.’

“The sacred members of this Most High Commission then reasoned that if the said mechanical instinct in these biped three-brained beings of that planet should develop towards the attainment of Objective Reason—as usually occurs everywhere among three-brained beings—then it might quite possibly happen that they would prematurely comprehend the real cause of their arising and existence and make a great deal of trouble; it might happen that having understood the reason for their arising, namely, that by their existence they should maintain the detached fragments of their planet, and being convinced of this their slavery to circumstances utterly foreign to them, they would be unwilling to continue their existence and would on principle destroy themselves.

Why ‘Men’ Are Not Men

BEELZEBUB sighed deeply and continued to speak as follows:

“After the actualizing on this planet of the ‘Innosoparnian’ process, one year by objective time calculation passed.

“In the course of this period there had gradually been established on this planet also, the corresponding processes of the involution and evolution of everything arisen there.

“Naturally also, there began gradually to be crystallized in the three-brained beings there also, the corresponding function for their acquisition of objective reasoning.

“In short, on this planet also everything was then already following the usual order.

“And therefore, my boy, there perhaps would not have been all the subsequent eccentricities associated with the three-brained beings arising on that ill-starred planet, if, at the end of a year, the Most High Commission under the supreme direction of the same Archangel Sakaki had not again gone there.

“This second descent thereto of the Most High Commission was due to this, that in spite of the measures they had taken of which I have just told you, complete assurance of the impossibility of any unwelcome surprise in the future had not crystallized in the Reasons of a majority of its sacred members and they then wished to verify on the spot the results of the measures they had taken.

“It was just during this second descent that the Most High Commission decided if only for their peace of mind, to actualize in any event still certain other special measures, among which was that measure also whose consequences have been not only gradually transformed

into a stupendous terror for the three-brained beings arising on this ill-starred planet themselves, but which have also become, so to say, a festering ulcer even for the whole of the great Universe.

“You must know that by the time of this second descent of the Most High Commission, there had already been gradually engendered in them—as is proper to three-brained beings—what is called ‘mechanical instinct.’

“The sacred members of this Most High Commission thereupon then reasoned that if the said mechanical instinct in these biped three-brained beings of that planet should develop towards the attainment of objective Reason—as usually is the case everywhere among three-brained beings—then it might happen that they would prematurely grasp the real cause of their arising and existence and make a good deal of trouble; it might happen that having understood the reason for their arising, namely, that by their existence they should maintain the separated fragments of their planet, and being convinced of this their slavery to circumstances utterly foreign to them, they would protest against continuing their existence and destroy themselves on principle.

their 'facial features' very definitely resemble those of the said quadrupeds; but on the other hand that what are called the 'psychic features' of all the separate species of these apes there are absolutely identical, even down to details, with those of the psyche of the three-brained beings there of the 'female sex.'"

At this point of his tales, Beelzebub made a long pause and looking at his favorite Hassein with a smile which very clearly expressed a double meaning, he, continuing to smile, said:

"In the text of the etherogram which I have just received, it is further said that in order this time finally to settle who has descended from whom—whether they from the apes or the apes from them—these freaks, your favorites, have even decided to carry out 'scientific experiments,' and furthermore that several of them have already left for the continent of Africa where many of these apes breed, with the object of bringing back from there the number required for these 'scientific investigations' of theirs.

"To judge by this etherogram, the beings of the planet

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Earth who have taken your fancy are again, in their turn, up to their 'extraordinary tricks.'

"From all I have learned about them during my observations, I foresee that this 'scientific experiment' will, of course, very greatly interest other of your favorites also, and will serve for a time as material to their strange Reason for endless discussion and talks.

"And all this will be quite in the order of things there.

"Concerning the 'scientific experiment' itself, which they propose to carry out with the apes taken back from Africa, I can with certainty say beforehand, that at any rate the first part of it will without any doubt, succeed 'wonderfully well.'

"And it will succeed wonderfully well, because the apes themselves, as beings of what is called a 'Terbelnian result,' are already, owing to their nature, extremely fond of occupying themselves with 'titillation' and before the day is out, will no doubt participate in and greatly assist your favorites in this 'scientific experiment' of theirs.

"As for those beings there who are going to carry out this 'scientific experiment,' and as for any benefit from it for the other three-brained beings there, it can all be pictured to oneself if one remembers the profoundly wise saying of our same honorable Mullah Nassr Eddin, in which he says: 'Happy is that father whose son is even busy with murder and robbery, for he himself will then have no time to get accustomed to occupy himself with "titillation."'"

"Yes, my boy, it seems that I have not yet told you why and by whom, since I left the solar system Ors, I am kept informed by etherogram of the most important events which proceed on various planets of that system, and, of course, also about events proceeding on your planet Earth.

"You remember I told you that my first descent in person upon the surface of that planet of yours took place

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'facial-features' very definitely resemble those of the said quadrupeds; but on the other hand, that what are called the 'psychic-features' of all the separate species of these apes there are absolutely identical, even down to the details, with those of the psyche of the three-brained beings there of the 'female sex.'"

At this point of his tales, Beelzebub made a long pause and looking at this favorite Hassein, with a smile which very clearly expressed a double meaning, he, continuing to smile, said:

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"To judge by this etherogram, the beings of the planet Earth

who have taken your fancy are again, in their turn, up to their 'extraordinary tricks.'

"From all I have learned about them during my observations, I foresee that this 'scientific-experiment' will, of course, very greatly interest other of your favorites also, and will serve for a time as material to their strange Reason for endless discussion and talks.

"And all this will be quite in the order of things there.

"Concerning the 'scientific-experiment' itself, which they propose to carry out with the apes taken back from Africa, I can with certainty say beforehand, that at any rate the first part of it will without any doubt, succeed wonderfully well.

"And it will succeed wonderfully well, because the apes themselves, as beings of what is called a 'Terbelnian-result' are already, owing to their nature, extremely fond of occupying themselves with 'titillation,' and before the day is out, will no doubt participate in and greatly assist your favorites in this 'scientific experiment' of theirs.

"As for those beings there who are going to carry out this 'scientific-experiment,' and as for any benefit from it for the other three-brained beings there, it can all be pictured if one remembers the profoundly wise saying of our same honorable Mullah Nassr Eddin, in which he says:

"Happy is that father whose son is even busy with murder and robbery, for he himself will then have no time to get accustomed to occupy himself with "titillation."'"

"Yes, my boy, it seems that I have not yet told you why and by whom, since I left the Solar System Ors, I am kept informed by etherograms of the most important events which proceed on various planets of that system, and, of course, also about events proceeding on your planet Earth.

"You remember I told you, that my first personal descent upon the surface of that planet of yours took place

“And in my opinion, as you also will surely understand eventually, it was precisely this second of the two mentioned chief abnormally established forms of ordinary being-existence, namely, the assigning of each other to different classes or castes that had specially become there the basis for the gradual crystallization in the common presences of these unfortunate favorites of yours, of that particular psychic property which, in the whole of the Universe, is inherent exclusively only in the presences of those three-brained beings.

“This exclusively particular property was formed in them soon after the second Transapalnian perturbation there, and, gradually undergoing development and becoming strengthened in them, was passed from generation to generation by heredity, until it has now already

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passed to the contemporary beings as a certain lawful and inseparable part of their general psyche, and this particular property of their psyche is called by themselves ‘egoism.’

“Some time later, in its appropriate place, during my further tales concerning the three-brained beings existing on the planet Earth, I shall also explain to you in detail how thanks to those conditions of external being-existence which were established there, your favorites first began assigning each other to various castes, and how, thanks to subsequent similar abnormalities, this same maleficent form of mutual relationship then established there has continued even until now. But meanwhile, concerning this exceptionally particular property of their general psyche, namely, egoism, it is necessary for you to know that the cause of the possibility of the arising in their common presences of this particular property was that, owing always to the same abnormal conditions established from the very beginning after the said second Transapalnian-perturbation there, their general psyche had become dual.

had remained whole in their subconsciousness for the bringing forth of the sacred being-impulse ‘conscience,’ had begun to take part in the process of that consciousness of theirs under the direction of which it had become proper to them to pass their ‘waking-state,’ and when, thanks to this, the beings of that period began to exist and to have relations with each other and to take from each other only in accordance with conscience, and when every kind of mutual ‘esteem’ and ‘aggrandizement’ began to proceed only in accordance with the personally acquired obvious moral attainments, then, with such mutual relations prevalent among them, the caste distinctions which had formerly existed and which were afterwards reestablished, were, at first, simply dissipated; and in the same way there afterwards gradually began to dissolve and disappear what are called the ‘pales of settlement’ of their separate independent communities.

“And in my opinion, as you also will surely understand eventually, it was precisely this second of the two mentioned chief abnormally established forms of ordinary being-existence, namely, this assigning of each other to different castes—that has specially become there the basis for the crystallization in the general presences of these unfortunate favorites of yours, of that particular psychic property which, in the whole of the Universe, exists exclusively only in the presences of those three-brained beings.

“This exclusively particular property was formed in them soon after the second Transapalnian-perturbation there, and gradually undergoing development and becoming strengthened in them, was passed from generation to generation by inheritance, until it has now already

passed to the contemporary beings as a certain lawful and inseparable part of their general psyche; this particular property of their psyche being called by themselves, ‘Egoism.’

← *The paragraph opposite will be found on the next page of this version of The Tales.*

“Concerning this exclusively particular property itself of their general psyche, it must assuredly be elucidated to you also, that later during the period of my last personal stay on the surface of this planet of yours, when I became deeply interested in the mentioned ‘Legominism’ concerning the deliberations of the Very Saintly Ashiata Shiemash entitled the ‘Terror of the Situation,’ the question arose in me, in the course of my further detailed researches and investigations relating

“This became fully evident to me when, during the period of my last sojourn on the surface of this planet of yours, I became deeply interested in the mentioned Legominism concerning the deliberations of the Very Saintly Ashiata Shiemash entitled ‘The Terror-of-the-Situation.’ I began in the course of my further detailed researches and investigations relating to his subsequent Very Saintly Activities and their results, to investigate the causes in which way and why the crystallization of the mentioned factors obtained from the particles of the emanation of the Sorrow of OUR COMMON FATHER CREATOR for the actualizing of the Divine being-impulse of objective conscience, proceeded in their presences, that is to say, just in their said subconsciousness, and thus avoided that final degeneration to which are subject all the data

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placed in them for engendering in their presences the being-impulses Faith, Love, and Hope, and I was convinced that this strange anomaly there fully justifies one of the numerous wise sentences of our highly esteemed, irreplaceable, and honorable Mullah Nassr Eddin which states:

“‘Every-real-happiness-for-man-can-arise-exclusively-only-from-some-unhappiness-also-real-which-he-has-already-experienced.’

The paragraph opposite will be found on the previous page in this version of The Tales. →

“The mentioned duality of their general psyche proceeded because on the one hand various what are called ‘individual-initiatives’ began to issue from that localization arising in their presences, which is always predominant during their waking existence, and which localization is nothing else but only the result of the accidental perceptions of impressions coming from without, and engendered by their abnormal environment, which perceptions in totality are called by them their ‘consciousness’; and on the other hand, similar individual-initiatives also began to issue in them, as it is proper to them, from that normal localization existing in the presences of every kind of being and which they call their subconsciousness.

“And because the mentioned individual-initiatives issue from such different

to his subsequent Very Saintly Activities and their results, in which way and why the crystallization of the mentioned factors obtained from the particles of the emanation of the sorrow of OUR COMMON FATHER CREATOR for the actualizing of the divine being-impulse of objective conscience, proceeded in their presences, that is, just in their said ‘subconsciousness,’ and thus avoided that final degeneration to which all the data placed in them for bringing forth in their presences the other sacred being-impulses, are subject.

“And concerning also this strange anomaly there, one of the numerous wise sentences of our highly esteemed, irreplaceable and honorable Mullah Nassr Eddin, can also be applied.

“In such cases he says:

“‘Every real happiness for man can arise exclusively only from some unhappiness—but also real—which he has already experienced.’

“Well, this said particular property of their general psyche, called ‘Egoism,’ was just gradually formed in them, only because of that mentioned abnormally established form in the process of their ordinary being-existence, namely, the assigning of each other to various ‘classes’ or ‘castes.’

“Some time later, in its appropriate place, during my further tales concerning the three-brained beings existing on the planet Earth, I shall also explain to you in detail how, thanks to those conditions of external being-existence which were established there, you favorites first began assigning each other to various castes, and how, thanks to subsequent similar abnormalities, this same maleficent form of mutual relation then established there, has continued even until now. But meanwhile for my present tale it is necessary for you to know that the basis for the arising in their general presence of the mentioned particular property of their psyche, namely the property of egoism, has also been the reason, owing always to the same abnormal conditions established from the very beginning after the second Transapalnian-perturbation there, that their general psyche has become dual.

“And this happened because on the one hand, various what are called ‘Individual-initiatives’ began to issue from that localization arising in their presences, which is always predominant during their waking-existence, and which localization is nothing else but only the result of the accidental perceptions of impressions coming from without, brought forth by their abnormal environment, which perceptions in totality are called by them their ‘consciousness’; and on the other hand, similar ‘Individual-initiatives’ also began to issue in them, as it is proper to them, from that normal localization existing in the presences of every kind of being and which they called their ‘subconsciousness.’

“And because the mentioned ‘Individual-initiatives’ issue from such different

memory that there could once have existed on the surface of their planet such a 'bliss,' specially and intentionally created for their existence by such a Reason,

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whose possessor is now one of our seven MOST VERY SAINTLY OMNICOSMIC INDIVIDUALS, without whose participation even our UNI-BEING COMMON FATHER does not allow himself to actualize anything.

"And now, my boy, after my tale about this Lentrohamsanin—thanks to which you obtained to a certain degree a conspactive account of the consequences for subsequent generations ensuing from the activities of such a typical representative of Eternal-Hasnamuss-individuals from among the three-brained beings of the planet Earth—it will now be quite opportune to explain to you, as I promised, a little more in detail about the significance of the word Hasnamuss.

"In general, those independent individuals are called and defined by the word Hasnamuss in whom, among what are called 'Individual-impulses,' a certain 'something' arises, which participates in what is called the 'completed formation' of independent individualities in the common presences of three-brained beings both of the highest possible coating as well as of those who consist only of the planetary body alone.

"This 'something' in these separate cosmic individuals arises and blends in the process of the transformation of substances in them with the crystallizations resulting from the action of the entire 'spectrum' of certain what are called 'Naloo-osnian-impulses.'

"This 'Naloo-osnian-spectrum-of-impulses' consists, on the basis of that chief cosmic law, the sacred Heptaparaparshinokh, according to the source of its essence in respect of the 'perception-of-engenderings' and the 'resulting-manifestations,' of seven heterogeneous aspects.

"If these separate aspects of the entire 'spectrum' of Naloo-osnian-impulses are described according to the notions of your favorites and expressed in their language, they might then be defined as follows:

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- (1) Every kind of depravity, conscious as well as unconscious
- (2) The feeling of self-satisfaction from leading others astray
- (3) The irresistible inclination to destroy the existence of other breathing creatures
- (4) The urge to become free from the necessity of actualizing the being-efforts demanded by Nature
- (5) The attempt by every kind of artificiality to conceal from others what in their opinion are one's physical defects
- (6) The calm self-contentment in the use of what is not personally deserved
- (7) The striving to be not what one is.

"This certain 'something' which arises in the presences of definite individuals

face of their planet there could once have existed such a 'bliss' specially and intentionally created for their existence by just such a Reason,

whose bearer is now one of our seven Most Very Saintly Omni-Cosmic Individuals, without whose participation even our UNI-BEING COMMON FATHER allows Himself to actualize nothing.

"I shall now elucidate rather more in detail concerning what I promised you a little while ago, namely, concerning the expression 'Hasnamuss.'

"In general, those independent individuals are called and defined by the word 'Hasnamuss' in whom, among a number of other what are called 'Individual-impulses' a certain 'something' obtained from the total presence of every three-brained being arises which participates in what is called their 'fulfilled-formation'; that is to say, which participates in the forming both of the 'planetary-body' itself and of the being and of his two higher being bodies at every stage of the perfecting of these latter.

"This 'something' in these separate cosmic Individuals arises and interblends in the process of crystallization from a certain, what is called 'Naloo-osnian-spectrum-of-impulses.'

"In addition to several very undesirable consequences for the said Individuals themselves, in whom they arise—about which I shall later also explain to you in detail—this said 'something' has still another particularity, namely, that as soon as the action of what is called 'intense-effort' ceases in the presences of the given arisings, it is always perceived and manifested according to some or other part of the mentioned 'Naloo-osnian-spectrum-of-impulses,' as if there were not enough of that something like the first and second being-foods, and it thus helps the totality of the whole given presence to manifest itself 'harmfully-actingly,' both for itself and for other independent Individuals around.

← The text opposite is found at the end of this chapter in *The 1931 Manuscript of The Tales.*