

Maurice Nicoll papers

MS 1348



July 2008

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
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beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 1348

CREATOR: Nicoll, Maurice, 1884-1953

TITLE: Maurice Nicoll papers

DATES: 1914-1996

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 8.02 linear feet (15 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, writings, research materials, scrapbooks and photographs documenting Maurice Nicoll's involvement with the ideas of P. D. Ouspensky and G. I. Gurdjieff. Included are manuscripts of an unpublished novel and short stories, seven scrapbooks, and a copy of Nicoll's five volume work *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky*. The scrapbooks contain clippings and photographs showing Gurdjieff with his group at the Prieuré Fontainbleu, as well as Nicoll's group which he formed in London. Three of the scrapbooks contain quotations from Gurdjieff's *All and Everything* with accompanying artwork, probably by a disciple of Nicoll's.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1348>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1348>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of the estate of Muriel Oldham, 1982; and Lewis Creed, 1993-1997, and 2006.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Maurice Nicoll Papers (MS 1348). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Maurice Nicoll, a psychologist, received his B.A., M.B., and B.C. degrees from Cambridge. He served as a medical officer for nervous system injuries at Empire Hospital, was a lecturer in medical psychology at Birmingham University, and was a member of the editorial staff of the *Journal of Neurology and Psychopathology*. Nicoll was the author of *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky*.

Scope and Contents

The Maurice Nicoll Papers serve as an interesting complement to the papers in the already sizeable P.D. Ouspensky Memorial Collection and illustrate the dissemination of the mystical teachings of Ouspensky and G. I. Gurdjieff in Britain.

Nicoll, a psychologist, had been a student of Carl Jung, and in the collection (folders 1 & 14) there are letters from Jung and his wife discussing their relationship with Nicoll. After joining an Ouspensky study group in London Nicoll became interested in the work of Gurdjieff and spent a year (circa 1922) at his institute at Fontainebleau, France. The Nicoll Papers contain two scrapbooks (f. 22 & 23) from the period; they were compiled by J. deForest Thompson who was at the institute as a young man with his mother, Mrs. Page. The scrapbooks contain interesting photographs of the institute and of Nicoll and Gurdjieff. There are also two handwritten letters addressed to Mrs. Page by Ouspensky. The papers contain a few other items specifically related to Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, including notes on Ouspensky's lectures and a photograph of him in India (folder 18) and the prospectus for Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, notes on his lectures, and a copy of his funeral service (folder 19).

Nicoll formed his own group in London and later during World War II, organized centers for carrying on the Teaching. A scrapbook (folder 20) contains photographs of Nicoll and his group at Tye-Ponds, 1935-40, and at Great Amwell House, 1946-53. The papers also contain a printed copy of his major work, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of G.I. Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky*.

For many years Mrs. Beryl Pogson was Nicoll's secretary, and many of these papers seem to have been kept by her or other members of the group at the Maurice Nicoll Free Library at the "Dicker". Pogson wrote a biography of Nicoll, compiled the scrapbook of photographs of the "Dicker" (folder 21), and may have been responsible for creating the three scrapbooks of artwork (folders 24-26) illustrating quotations from Gurdjieff's *All and Everything*. The papers also contain a few scattered items written by other members of Nicoll's group and some reference materials from the shelves of the library at the "Dicker".

The papers were received by the Yale Library in 1982, along with several hundred volumes, from Muriel Oldham. (Mrs. Oldham's husband had been a Nicoll student and had taken over the Nicoll library after Nicoll's death in 1953.) The volumes were received for the general collection in Sterling Library, but amongst them were the scrapbooks, writing, photographs; and pieces of correspondence now comprising the Maurice Nicoll Papers.

Collection Contents

Original Accession, Circa 1914-1994

Materials of Dr. Nicoll

| | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | Correspondence A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1950, 1953, undated |
| b. 1, f. 2 | "Pelican Hotel": TMs for unpublished novel English | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 3 | "Stories" : TMs for unpublished short stories English | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 4 | <i>Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of C.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky</i> , vol. 1, 2 | 1949 |
| b. 2, f. 5-6 | <i>Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of C.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky</i> , vol. 3-5 | 1949, 1955, 1956 |
| b. 2, f. 7-8 | "Index to <i>Psychological Commentaries</i> " English | Undated |
| b. 3, f. 9 | "A Simple Explanation of Work Ideas" English | Undated |
| b. 3, f. 10 | "Extracts from Dr. Nicoll's Diary in Connection with P.D. Ouspensky" English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | Undated |
| b. 3, f. 11 | <i>Tresor Hermetique</i> : annotated by Nicoll with AMs "The Emerald Table of Hermes" A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | Circa 1914 |
| b. 3, f. 12 | Notes on Dr. Nicoll's meetings | 1944-1951 |
| b. 3, f. 12 | Unpublished paper | Undated |
| b. 3, f. 13 | "Introduction to a Scientific Paper" [by Nicoll?] English | 1944 |
| b. 3, f. 14 | Materials of Beryl and Midge Pogson A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1953-1966,undated |
| b. 3, f. 15 | Materials of other Members of Dr. Nicoll's group | 1956, 1963,1981,1993, undated |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| b. 4, f. 16-17 | Materials of other members of Dr. Nicoll's group A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | Undated |
| b. 4, f. 18 | Materials about P.D. Ouspensky A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1922-1936, undated |
| b. 4, f. 19 | Materials about Gurdjieff A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1921-1966, undated |
| Scrapbook | | |
| b. 5, f. 20 | Photographs of Dr. Nicoll's Group | 1946-1953 |
| b. 5, f. 21 | Photographs of the Dicker | Circa 1966-1976 |
| b. 6, f. 22 | Photographs and letters relating to Mr. Gurdjieff and his group at the Prieuré, Fontainbleau A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1922-1923, 1933 |
| b. 6, f. 23 | Press cuttings printed at the time about Mr. Gurdjieff and his group at the Prieuré, Fontainbleau A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1923 |
| b. 7, f. 24 | <i>All and Everything</i> First Picture Book English | Undated |
| b. 7, f. 25 | <i>All and Everything</i> Second Picture Book English | Undated |
| b. 8, f. 26 | <i>All and Everything</i> Third Picture Book English | Undated |
| Books relating to the teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff, P. D. Ouspensky, and Maurice Nicoll, written and/or compiled by Beryl Pogson and others | | |
| b. 9, f. 27 | <i>Commentary on the Fourth Gospel</i> English | 1993 |
| b. 9, f. 27 | <i>Work Talks in Brighton, 1963-1966</i> | 1993 |
| b. 9, f. 27 | <i>More Work Talks</i> English | 1993 |
| b. 9, f. 27 | <i>Work Talks at The Dicker, 1966</i> | 1993 |
| b. 9, f. 27 | <i>Unforgotten Fragments</i> | 1994 |

Books written by or about Beryl Pogson

| | | |
|-------------|---|------|
| b. 9, f. 28 | Beryl Chassereau Pogson: a biographical foreword for <i>In The East My Pleasure Lies</i> compiled by Lewis Creed | 1993 |
| b. 9, f. 28 | <i>In The East My Pleasure Lies and other Esoteric Interpretations of Plays by William Shakespeare</i> , by Beryl Pogson English | 1994 |

Accession 1994-M-091: Additional Material, 1940-1994

Also includes Accessions 1995-M-087 and 1995-M-108

Books relating to the teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff, P. D. Ouspensky, and Maurice Nicoll, written and/or compiled by Beryl Pogson and others (early undated editions)

| | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | <i>Commentary on the Fourth Gospel</i> (2 copies) English | |
| b. 1, f. 1 | <i>Work Talks in Brighton, 1963 to 1966</i> | |
| b. 1, f. 1 | <i>More Work Talks, 1966</i> English | |
| b. 1, f. 1 | <i>Work-Talks at the Dicker, 1966</i> | |
| Books written/compiled by Beryl Pogson | | |
| b. 1, f. 2 | <i>Romeo and Juliet: an Esoteric Interpretation</i> | 1961 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | <i>Three Plays by Shakespeare: an Esoteric Interpretation</i> | 1963 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | <i>Royalty of Nature: A Commentary on Shakespeare's History-Plays</i> | 1967 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | <i>The Choice</i> (2 copies) | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 2 | <i>Curiosities in Literature: a Fragment of an Unfinished Anthology</i> , compiled by Beryl Pogson, commentaries by Maurice Nicoll English | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Research material for the biographical-foreword of <i>In the East My Pleasure Lies</i> , by Beryl Pogson | 1955, 1992-1993 |
| b. 1, f. 4-5 | Incomplete drafts: pages of writings and notes of Maurice Nicoll, Beryl Pogson, and other members of Nicoll's group | 1940s-1960s |
| writings of others | | |
| b. 1, f. 6 | "Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Nicoll - A Living Teaching?" by T. I. Casswell English | 1960 |
| b. 1, f. 7 | "Memories of EQ and Eve," by Louisa Creed English | 1994 |
| b. 1, f. 8 | "In Memory of E. Q. Nicholson" : memorial service English | 1992 November 4 |
| b. 1, f. 9 | "A Note on the story of Jacob," by Laurie Goodman English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 10 | <i>Vibrations</i> , by Muriel Farmer Oldham | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 11 | <i>Words on the Work: by a Worker Talking to Other Workers</i> , anonymous | Undated |

| | | |
|-------------|---|------|
| b. 1, f. 12 | <i>The Work Life: Based on Teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff, P. D. Ouspensky and Maurice Nicoll</i> , by Beryl Pogson (Accession 1995-M-087) | 1994 |
| b. 1, f. 13 | <i>Centenary Fragments</i> , by Beryl Pogson, compiled by Lewis Creed English (Accession 1995-M-108) | 1995 |

Accession 1995-M-123: Additonal material, 1916-1987

Also includes Accession 1995-M-125

| | | |
|--------------|--|---------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1-2 | Incomplete drafts, pages of writings and notes, of Maurice Nicoll, Beryl Pogson, and other members of Nicoll's group | 1930s-1975, undated |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Memoriam program for Beryl Pogson | 1967 February 5 |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Photographs A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1916-1976 |
| b. 1, f. 5 | <i>Maurice Nicoll: A Portrait</i> , by Beryl Pogson English | 1987 |

Accession 1995-M-186: Additional Material, 1965-1995

Also includes Accession 1996-M-006 and 1996-M-067

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| Additional Material Accession 1995-M-186 | | |
| b. 1, f. 1 | <i>Diogenes in Time and Tide (1955-1960)</i> English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Diogenes may have been W.J. Brown M.P., Independent Member of Parliament for Rugby, student of P.D. Ouspensky; original newspaper articles accompany publication. | 1995 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | Ouspensky study group meeting notes [recorded by Beryl Pogson] | 1963 May 7 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | "Shakespeare and the 'Supernatural' -II", <i>Light</i> [by Beryl Pogson] English | 1965 |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Holiday greeting cards of Maurice and Catherine Nicoll | Undated |
| Additional Material Accession 1996-M-006 | | |
| b. 1, f. 5 | <i>Practical Work Tasks</i> [by Beryl Pogson, compiled by Lewis Creed from meeting notes between 1960-1966] | 1995 |
| Additional Material Accession 1996-M-067 | | |
| b. 1, f. 6 | <i>Informal Work Talks and Teachings, 1940-1950</i> [by Maurice Nicoll, compiled by Lewis Creed] English | 1995 |

Accession 1996-M-092: Additional Material, 1940-1996

Also includes Accession 1997-M-061

| Additional Material Accession 1996-M-092 | | |
|---|---|---------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | "Movements, Sacred Dances and Ritual Exercises of Gurdjieff," [theater program for the Fortune Theater, London] English | 1952 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | Personal note from Lewis Creed [description of his introduction to the work of Maurice Nicoll] A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1957 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | "Informal Work Talks of Dr. Nicoll," [typescript of notes on and extracts from talks given by Maurice Nicoll from 1940-1950, compiled by Lewis Creed] English Ouspensky, P. D. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 4 | List of mental exercises for his pupils | 1940s |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Printed material about his burial site at Lyne | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 5 | "The Mural: the Labours of Hercules" English Typescript of the impressions of Beryl Pogson's study group on painting the mural of Hercules in the classroom at Dorton. | 1957 |
| b. 1, f. 6 | "Beryl Pogson's Centenary" English | 1995 |
| Additional Material Accession 1997-M-061 | | |
| b. 1, f. 7 | <i>Notes Taken at Meetings with Maurice Nicoll: January 18, 1934 to April 28, 1934</i> English Compiled by a member of Nicoll's group; typescript and publication. | 1996 |

Accession 1997-M-108: Additional material, 1962, undated

| | | |
|------------|--|---------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | "The Choice," compiled by Beryl Pogson English | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 2 | Diagrams from Dr. Nicoll's Room" Photocopies of diagrams pertaining to the universe. | Undated |
| | Photographs | |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Art works | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 4 | The Dicker Includes two drawings of residence. | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 5 | Nicoll, Maurice A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | Undated |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Pogson, Beryl | 1962, undated |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Theobald, Minnie | Undated |

Accession 2006-M-080: Additional material, Undated

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| b.1 | "Some Impressions of Dorton, Christmas 1956." English | Undated |
|-----|--|---------|

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Occupations

Psychologists

Names

Gurdjieff, Georges Ivanovitch, 1872-1949

Nicoll, Maurice, 1884-1953

Pogson, Beryl, 1895-

Uspenskiĭ, P. D. (Petr Dem'ĭaĭnovich), 1878-1947