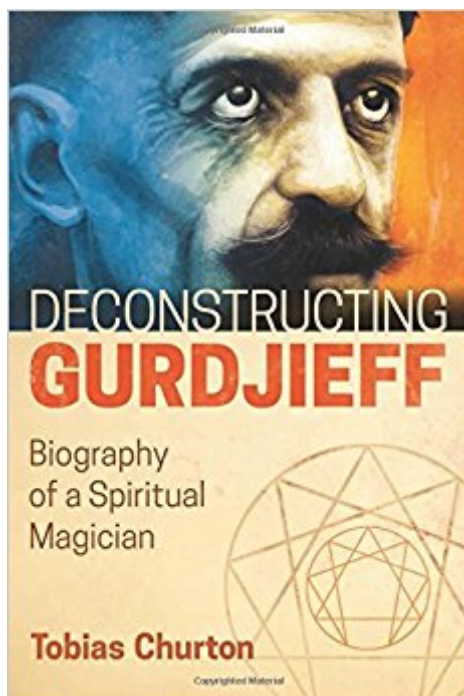


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Deconstructing Gurdjieff: Biography Of A Spiritual Magician



Synopsis

Beyond Meetings with Remarkable Men into the truth behind the self-crafted mythology of Gurdjieff's life Reveals evidence that Gurdjieff was a secret Freemason, relying on hypnotism, psychic research and spiritualism Explores the profound influence of the Yezidis, esoteric Christianity, and the "gnostics" of Islam, the Sufis, on Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teachings and the "Work" Uncovers the truth behind Gurdjieff's relations with Aleister Crowley Accurately dates Gurdjieff's real activities, particularly his enigmatic early life In November 1949, architect Frank Lloyd Wright announced the death of "the greatest man in the world," yet few knew who he was talking about. Enigmatic, misunderstood, declared a charlatan, and recently dubbed "the Rasputin who inspired Mary Poppins," Gurdjieff's life has become a legend. But who really was George Ivanovich Gurdjieff? Employing the latest research and discoveries, including previously unpublished reminiscences of the real man, Tobias Churton investigates the truth beneath the self-crafted mythology of Gurdjieff's life recounted in Meetings with Remarkable Men. He examines his controversial birthdate, his father's background, and his relationship with his private tutor Dean Borshch, revealing a perilous childhood in a Pontic Greek family, persecuted by Turks, forced to migrate to Georgia and Armenia, only to grow up amid more war, persecution, genocide, and revolt. Placing Gurdjieff in the true context of his times, Churton explores Gurdjieff's roles in esoteric movements taking root in the Russian Empire and in epic imperial construction projects in the Kars Oblast, Transcaucasia, and central Asia. He reveals Gurdjieff's sources for his transformative philosophy, his early interest in hypnosis, magic, Theosophy, and spiritualism, and the profound influence of the Yezidis and the Sufis, the "gnostics" of Islam, on Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teachings and the "Work." Churton also explores Gurdjieff's ties to Freemasonry and his relationships with other spiritual teachers and philosophers of the age, such as Madame Blavatsky, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Aleister Crowley, dispelling the myth that Gurdjieff forcibly expelled the "Great Beast" from his Institute. Showing how Gurdjieff deliberately re-shaped elements of his life as parables of his system, Churton explains how he didn't want people to follow his footsteps but to find their own, to wake up from the hypnosis that drives us blindly through life. Offering a vital understanding of the man who asked "How many of you are really alive?" the author reveals the continuing importance of Gurdjieff's philosophy for the awakening of man.

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Customer Reviews

"Churton's remarkable ability to make a coherent narrative out of disparate information while also weaving in other research interests, such as the influence of Aleister Crowley, makes this a valuable resource for those familiar with Gurdjieff's work, and it's easily readable for those coming fresh to the topic." (Publishers Weekly) "They seek him here, they seek him there . . . that damned elusive Gurdjieff--part sage, part trickster, part prophet, part legend. Tobias Churton, in pursuit of this enigmatic figure, casts his net both wide and deep and delivers a wonderfully rich and nuanced account of Gurdjieff and the many currents that flowed into his life and teaching."

(Christopher McIntosh, Ph.D., author of *Eliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival*) ". . .

. . . a scholarly journey that pursues an in-depth analysis of this purposely enigmatic spiritual teacher's biography . . . offers perceptive insights into the spiritual and psychological teachings of Gurdjieff's idiosyncratic genius and sheds light on the folktale-like stories of the relationship between Aleister Crowley and Gurdjieff. This book is comprehensive, entertaining, and highly recommended." (James Wasserman, author of *Templar Heresy: A Story of Gnostic Illumination*) "According to Albert Einstein, 'If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.' Churton understands. He has a profound ability to write about complex esoteric subjects in clear, down-to-earth language. Here he delves deep into the life of Gurdjieff in an attempt to separate fact from fiction and the myth from the man. As always, there is great wisdom and a uniquely modern perspective in Churton's meticulous thought and prose. Deconstructing Gurdjieff, like all his books, is immensely informative,

highly provocative--and a great read. (John Zorn, composer-performer) "Tobias brings to this highly perceptive and realistic picture of Gurdjieff expert knowledge of Western esotericism, the Yezidis, and Aleister Crowley--all of which have long needed a measured place in this mage's story. This is a timely reappraisal and deconstruction of the spiritual ludibrium and life of a Master. (Stephen J. King (Shiva X), Grand Master, Ordo Templi Orientis)

Britain's leading scholar of Western Esotericism, Tobias Churton is a world authority on Gnosticism, Hermeticism, and Rosicrucianism. An Honorary Fellow of Exeter University, where he is a faculty lecturer, he holds a master's degree in Theology from Brasenose College, Oxford, and is the author of many books, including Aleister Crowley: The Beast in Berlin and Occult Paris. He lives in the heart of England.

This new book authored by Oxford graduate and professional writer Tobias Churton, fulfills the profile depicted by Mr. Gurdjieff in "Beelzebub Tales" under its chapter I "The arousing of thought", when Mr. Gurdjieff, about contemporary writers, affirms: "This strange disease is manifested by this, that if the invalid is somewhat literate and his rent is paid for three months in advance, he (she or it) unfailingly begins to write a either some "instructive article" or a whole book. Mr. Churton's book is a full compendium of the "literary language of the bon-ton", "the grammatical wiseacrings of professional writers" as well as "the literary language of the intelligentsia". Mr. Churton depicts an allegedly low-self esteem Gurdjieff presumably because he did not get a college degree as Mr. Churton did in Oxford. See what Mr. Churton writes: "I personally suspect he had a chip on his shoulder about never having graduated from university, so vehement were his repeated digs at "wiseacring," that occurs with tiresome, arguably obsessive repetitiveness throughout all his writings and talks; followers have picked the word up and scatter it like buckshot from self-elevated heights at critics. This assertion is proper of a Hasnamuss candidate. Regarding Mr. Gurdjieff's birthdate, Mr. Churton fails to acknowledge that in the book "Views from the real world" in the New York conference dated February 20, 1924, Mr. Gurdjieff himself is quoted as saying: "I reason in this way: I am a small man. I have only lived for fifty years, and religion has existed for thousands of years. End of the speculation. As per Mr. Gurdjieff's own words, he was born in 1873. Mr. Churton could have saved

us from another long and boring chapter. Concerning the surname Gurdjieff, I would like to clarify that it is indeed connected to both Gurdjistan (which means Land of Wolves) while the root KRT is also connected with KURT (Wolf), as well as with the KARTULI tribe, one of the three founding clans of SAKARTVELO (Georgia), along with the SVAN and MEGRELIAN tribes. Mr. Churton makes a mistake when he asserts that the PRIEUR belonged to the Dreyfuss family. Not at all true, it never belonged to the Dreyfuss family, it used to belong to the widow of the lawyer that defended the Jewish military Dreyfuss. Mr. Churton under the influence of his organ Kundabuffer, shows us his ridiculous talent as a literary critic. About "Beelzebub's Tales" he says: "In this even more peculiar, often perhaps intentionally ludicrous and unnecessarily elongated work | "Mr. Churton dares to criticize the grammaticality of "Beelzebub Tales", when he states: "He (Gurdjieff) opens his Beelzebub Tales with an excessively long-winded attack/defense explaining why his book does not read like anyone else's". Another brilliant Churton's quote: "Gurdjieff's habitual discourse is filled with pseudo-objectivity, where the plainest statements are dressed in quasi-scientific terms, reaching, in Tales particularly, fantastic levels of repetition, invented words, and arch pretentiousness." Mr. Churton emphatically suggests and it could have been written in a more friendly way and by saving 20% of words, he writes: "There are many more perceptions of good sense in Tales, though it needs editing to about one-fifth of its current length and to be recast in clearer sentences, with spiritual understanding of its wise, humorous contents; then Tales would enjoy considerably greater currency". Evidently, Mr. Churton ignores that this Hasnamussian effort to edit Gurdjieff's masterpiece was already attempted by the so-called "1992 Revision". It is also obvious that Mr. Churton never read "Beelzebub Tales" three times, so he is unable to grasp the encrypted esoteric legominism of its words. Somehow, Mr. Churton deconstructs Mr. Gurdjieff suggesting he was a Free-Mason or a Gnostic in disguise. Is this a fact, an opinion or information? Mr. Churton is obviously biased, he sees and edits reality according to his predetermined aim. Anyway, reading through this book has been a test of endurance in terms of Intentional Suffering and Conscious Work. Thank you Mr. Churton! Hopefully after my review, other readers will save some valuable time and hard-earned money

The book is just a collection of theories and factoids compiled and not even woven into an interesting story. I was so very disappointed. Such an interesting character deserved a much more

interesting story.

I agree with much of Mr. Braunstein review. Gurdjieff was concerned about objective knowledge not mechanical gathering of informations so common in today academia that benefit mostly Formatory center. For much of the book author speculate about Gurdjieff date of birth. It is clear from Transcripts that Gurdjieff was born in 1866, the same date as Madame de Salzmann posted in her book The Reality of Being as she should know the best Overall review of this book as would Gurdjieff probably would say " too much wisecracking. Two stars for effort..

Mr Churton promises and delivers very good to excellent 'products` and this book is an another very good one. It really is a deconstruction, a very careful one. Mr Churton deliberately keeps a careful distance from Gurdjieff s private adult life. The chapters on Yezidis and Sufis are interesting, specifically the pages on Yezidi beliefs. Yezidis are perhaps very misunderstood (or locally well understood?) people living in Northern Syria, right on and alongside Turkish border. (Unrelated to this review, that land is now partly/largely controlled by Turkish Military together with US special forces). This could have been an excellent masterpiece had Mr Churton presented his views on Gurjieff s spiritual magic.

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