

# STUDYING G. I. GURDJIEFF: SCHOLARS AND PRACTITIONERS IN CONVERSATION

## A Symposium, 3 December 2019



George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (c. 1866-1949) is one of three foundational figures of modern “secularized” esotericism, yet he is far less studied than Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), co-founder of the Theosophical Society, and Rudolf Steiner (1851-1925), founder of Anthroposophy. Much of Gurdjieff’s biography is speculative, and his teaching (the “Fourth Way”, or the “Work”) is contested in terms of its sources (Christian, Sufi, Traditionalism), and its classification (religion, spirituality, esotericism, psychology). “Insider” accounts of varying inflection continue to dominate publications about Gurdjieff. With the exception of a small number of publications, the analysis of Gurdjieff within the Study of Religion/s is an emergent field. This symposium contributes to this new wave in the study of Gurdjieff, and it approaches its subject within the historical, comparative and theoretical concerns of the academy. The purpose is a more complete analysis, including Gurdjieff’s sources and teaching techniques, key texts and contexts for communicating the “message”, and orthodox and heterodox continuations of the Gurdjieff teaching after his death. The Movements, and the music Gurdjieff composed with Thomas de Hartmann (1885-1956), will be featured; these demonstrate the importance of dialogue between scholars and practitioners.

**SPEAKERS:** Steven J. Sutcliffe (University of Edinburgh, UK); Michael Pittman (Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, US); Joseph Azize (University of Sydney); David Robertson (Open University, UK); Vrasidas Karalis (University of Sydney); Jeremy Johnson (University of Sydney); and Carole M. Cusack (University of Sydney).

**MOVEMENTS:** Dancers taught and accompanied by Dorine Tolley (Sydney).

**GURDJIEFF-DE HARTMANN MUSIC:** Played by Dorine Tolley and Johanna Petsche (Sydney).

**VENUE:** John Woolley Building A20, University of Sydney, Science Road Entrance, Lecture Theatre S325, 9 AM – 5 PM.

This event is free of charge and catered. We ask that you RSVP for catering purposes. Please e-mail Carole Cusack ([carole.cusack@sydney.edu.au](mailto:carole.cusack@sydney.edu.au)) and nominate any dietary restrictions.