



***Marx, Gurdjieff, and
Mannheim:***
**Contested Utopistics of Self
and Society in a World-
History Context¹**

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This presentation is more an exercise in theorizing history (in this case the dialectics of world-history and utopistic praxis) than in historiography, though I am not sure if the two can really be separated and dualized as such. My concern here is with contested identities (in a world-history context) of not just who we are, but who we can and should be. What attracted me to this panel topic was in fact the ways in which it could accommodate comparative and cross-disciplinary discourses of self and world on one hand and theory and practice on the other. Above all, however, from the standpoint of my applied sociological interest in comparative utopistics, it

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allowed me to problematize and historicize the taken-for-granted notion of "contestation" itself, questioning whether identities *have to be* contested, even if they have undoubtedly been so, throughout millennia.

In what follows I will try to share with you in outline the argument advanced in my dissertation research titled "Mysticism and Utopia: Towards the Sociology of Self-Knowledge and Human Architecture" (Tamdgidi 2002). Therein, I have explored the utopistic theories of Karl Marx, G. I. Gurdjieff, and Karl Mannheim as contested efforts towards the good life in self and society within a world-historical framework. I argue that the three approaches—representing western utopian, eastern mystical, and academic movements—are fragmented microcosms of an otherwise singular creative human search for the good life. Their mutual alienations, I argue, are rooted in fragmented philosophical, religious, and scientific ideologies which have emerged in conjunction with the broad historical transitions of ancient civilizations to classical political, medieval cultural, and modern economic empires. Human architecture and the sociology of self-knowledge are then introduced as creative conceptual, curricular, and pedagogical efforts beyond the contested terrains of fragmented utopistics in favor of a just global society.

"Utopistics" is a term recently coined by Immanuel Wallerstein denoting "the serious assessment of historical alternatives, the exercise of our judgment as to the substantive rationality of alternative possible historical systems. It is the sober, rational, and realistic evaluation of human social systems, the constraints on what they can be, and the zones open to human creativity. Not the face of the perfect (and inevitable) future, but the face of an alternative, credibly better, and historically possible (but far from certain) future. It is thus an exercise simultaneously in science, politics, and morality" (1998a 1-2). I use the concept with certain important qualifications, however.

First, utopistics in my view must simultaneously deal with macro and micro processes, with broad structural concerns as well as everyday interactive issues. Second, it must eschew ethnocentrism and actively embrace comparative approaches across cultural traditions. Third, it must involve both rigorous assessment and actual application. Utopistics, in my view, is the comparative applied sociology (or historiography—reflective and creative) of the good life—of realistic seeking of optimally better selves, persons, communities, and worlds. The utopistic approach to applying sociology moves beyond either the mainstream or merely oppositional/anti-systemic modes of resolving concrete everyday problems; it seeks positive self and social change by the example of its alternative methodological, theoretical, practical, and inspirational innovations and solutions.

My purpose here is to use Marx, Gurdjieff, and Mannheim as representative doors for entering the stratified building rooms of theories we have inherited from modern or traditional, western or eastern, spacetimes, critically assessing their usefulness in helping us effectively move beyond our inner and broader social contestations and alienations in favor of the good life. I will conclude with my translation of another representative example from the mystical poetry of Rumi with a brief note on his poetic utopistics in a world-historical context—one in which the audience is simultaneously one's own selves, the face-to-face "others," and all future (and in remembrance all past) human generations.

I

I begin my reflections on Marx's theories of social stratification and revolution with the perceived stereotyped assumptions some carry, in the context of a deeply materialistic culture, that upper classes are

happy when underclasses are not. In other words, the implicit value-judgments of our stratification theories, including those of oppositional ideologies as advanced by Marx, is that somehow being upper-class equates with happiness and being lower-class does not—hence, the struggle to overthrow one type of class privilege (private property) in favor of another type of class privilege (collective property as owned by the victorious proletariat), in the hope that the latter will eventually lead to the disappearance of class distinctions in general in the course of a transition under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The underlying assumption of such a stratification theory of liberation, therefore, is that we need to change the form of property ownership (from individual and private to social and public) in order to rid society of the ills of class division. What is problematized, in other words, is not the "possessive" attitude towards things, material or otherwise, in the first place. When a Native American says, for instance, "Earth does not belong to us, we belong to earth," he or she is not contrasting private with public property, but questioning the very possessive attitude of humanity towards things, individual or collective—in this case towards the whole of nature and earth. Conversely, however, Marx's "Workers of the World, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains, but you have a world to win!" still carries the message that the goal is to possess the world albeit collectively, NOT to become free from possessiveness itself—as Fromm or Adorno would suggest, liberating ourselves from the "have" attitude towards things in favor of the "being" attitude, away from the fetishism of things, from being habituated and attached to things, from being dominated and controlled by things. Marx may have espoused a challenge to the bourgeois form of materialism and property ownership, but his proletarian materialism, apart from the latter's philosophical content, still shared with the bourgeoisie

the notion that human happiness involves primarily material wants, and that human liberation ultimately originates from and must be guided by a concern for material interests and objectives. Marxism, after all, was a western artifact.

Marx's mature theory of stratification and revolution is based on an assumed dualized and stratified primacy of nature over humankind, of economy and politics over culture, of matter over mind, of materialism over idealism. The dualistic framework of these oppositions are strongly present in the mature Marx (a distinction between mature and young Marx is necessary of course, for the young Marx, influenced by Hegel, believed that the solution lies in neither materialism nor idealism, but in a humanism which sees humanity as part of nature, endowed with its powers). If mind was seen as a part of matter without any predetermination attached to the latter aspect, then we may have found education, literature, or poetry to have been at least as significant a weapon to wage the war for the good life as the weapon of the arms. The most troubling aspect of Marx's theory of stratification and de-stratification (through the agency of a revolutionary proletariat) was its self-fulfilling prophetic logic which played into the hands of a materialistic bourgeoisie which equated material possessions (albeit in collective ownership) with the human liberative agenda. That human liberation inherently is about liberation *from* unconscious attachment to things, ideas, feelings, sensations, relations, and processes, that human liberation is about the power of the mind over matter, of intelligence and rational self-knowledge and determination over purely "material" interests to possess things, was regrettably repressed in the transition from the young to the old Marx.

Through a critical revisitation of how Marx constructed his theory of social stratification and revolution, I have tried to show how inherently inconsistent his theo-

retical framework was in all its three political, economic, and philosophical components. I have argued that the thesis of the dictatorship of the proletariat is inherently a contradiction in terms, since the propertyless class that assumes political supremacy inherently metamorphoses into a collectively property owning class whose characteristics cannot be, as even predicated by the theoretical framework of Marx's own historical materialism, the same as the pre-revolutionary class. Note here that I am not arguing for the historical contingency of a misguided or degenerated proletariat in Soviet Union, China, or elsewhere, but I am saying that the very theory of a proletarian dictatorship is inherently a contradiction in terms and thereby flawed. The proletariat that assumes, in part or even as an ideally international whole, political supremacy and collective ownership of the social means of production cannot by definition remain a propertyless, hence a proletarian class.

On the economic front, I have also argued that the very formulaic representation of Marx's theory of the falling general rate of profit in capitalism is a demonstration of the fact that the transition from capitalism to socialism or communism can never be a purely economic act and thus objectively inevitable, but cultural and political self-awareness and organization of all classes, including the revolutionary class, are equally (if not more) important factors that can determine whether or not a transition will take place at all. Culture is not a superstructure flying overhead, but actually a potentially determining material productive force. The mechanistic "laws of motion of society" theorization of the inevitability of transition built into Marx's stratification and revolution theories, in other words, is inherently flawed for it relegates such a possibility to the a priori and predetermined forces of an objectively developing economic agency.

The dualism of economy/politics vs.

culture, I further argue, was rooted in another fatal inconsistency in Marx's philosophical arsenal, which has escaped the gnawing teeth of even the most critical of post- or ex-Marxists, i.e., the dualism of idealism vs. materialism. What I find quite perplexing in my autopsy of Marx, is that at the very same time Marx and Engels were preoccupied with rescuing human social imagination from mechanistics of formal Aristotelian logic espousing either/or argumentations—favoring instead a dialectical logic of identity of opposites—they increasingly fell trapped in the argument that dialectical method must itself be *either* idealist *or* materialist. The primacy of matter over mind can only thrive in the ontological environment of dualized matter/mind conceptions, since otherwise, if mind is seen as a part of matter, as a material force of specific nature and vibration itself, then the predetermined and universal primacy of one over the other would become a tautological argument.

I have much respect for Marx, and in many ways, as he advised through Engels, to be fateful to him is not to be a Marxist, i.e., not to be habituated to his thought and methods as levers for construction of truth. My critique of Marx is a self-critique in more personal terms as pursued in more detailed in my dissertation. Time does not allow me to dwell more on this personal side or on my critical revisit of Marx's theory of history, but what I like to convey here is the proposition that Marx's sociology of stratification based on which he constructed the edifice of his applied sociology of revolution, was itself dualistic and stratified. The very "building" or "three storeys" metaphor used by Marx to construct his "guiding thread" and revolutionary paradigm in terms of economic base and politico-legal and ideological superstructures was an inherently dualized architectural construct. In such a metaphor, what exists on one floor, say in the foundation, cannot be at the very same time present in

other floors. Culture and knowledge cannot be economic and political forces, economy cannot be a cultural artifact, and radical revolution cannot be based on purely cultural, educational, or artistic strategies. In the dissertation I have exhaustively deconstructed this stratified architectural metaphor in Marx, still a common schema used subconsciously in even non-Marxist social scientific discourses, in the hope of a radical remodelling of our subconscious visual artifacts in favor of more humanistic architectural pursuits to bring about creative social change simultaneously in personal and world-historical spacetimes.

My self-critique of Marx's theory is not of course to be interpreted as a reversion back to mainstream sociological theories and practice, not historically as a reversion back to the outdated modes of capitalist organization of the workforce, but as an effort to search for alternative methodological and theoretical tools needed in favor of the good life. The defeat of Marxist theory, as Marx himself would have proclaimed in his political writings, is not a defeat of revolution, but the defeat of our own shortcomings and hesitations in pursuing it. In this case, the obstacles were hesitations to see oneself and one's own theories as being implicated in the social reality we try to change for the better, an approach which was inherently missing from Marx's objective, nineteenth century classical scientific, paradigm of social change. Marx's era was one in which social science was still emerging from the midst of philosophical argumentations. Being trained in philosophy himself, Marx had a deep-seated propensity to approach his science of revolution from a philosophical point of view, involving pre-conceived ideological argumentations—of course packaged and legitimated in a framework conducive to proletarian interests and revolutionary projects. Despite Marx's considerable contributions to social science, at its roots his paradigm was a philosophically inspired

western utopian project.

Paradoxically, however, Marx's drive to seek an "objective" and scientific framework to pursue utopistics was made at the expense of the individual self-reflexiveness that has traditionally been, somewhat, the preoccupation of philosophical tradition, albeit in abstract forms. Society for Marx was about interpersonal relations, while the intrapersonal reality was seen at best as an automatic product of the outer social reality and conflicts. Social stratification was perceived as that between assumed "individuals," whereby each person could easily be boxed into this or that class, group, or party, if not sitting between the chairs of major social classes—as in the case of the petty-bourgeoisie. Marx's view of society was atomistic and Newtonian, not relativist and quantal, not based on relationality of selves that cross skin boundaries of visible bodies. In his theory of stratification, it was not possible as a matter of rule for the same person to belong to multiple class groupings. It was no wonder then that revolutionary change was sought primarily in outer interpersonal relations only, and not simultaneously in the intrapersonal class, gender, race, and ethnic stratifications of our selfhoods and psychologies. Such a theorization, of course, was predisposed to allow the possibility and necessity of social change through violence, for economic, political, or ideological powers could be more or less easily boxed into separate persons who could raise and use arms against one another. That the person could be simultaneously a member of dominated and dominating classes, oppressor and oppressed, discriminating and discriminated, etc., would have required much more than waging a ruthless struggle against the so-called "other." It would have involved serious preoccupations with self-reflectiveness and change within—would have involved serious needs to theorize not only a sociology, but a self-reflective social psychology of revolution. It is certainly true that later the-

orists, especially the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School filled significant gaps in Marxist theorizing about the self and social psychology of revolution; however, it is important to still note the difference between the sociologies and social psychologies of *others'* selves on one hand, and the sciences of *self*-knowledge and *self*-change found elsewhere such as in the eastern cultural traditions.

To borrow and revise Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, "Marxists interpreted and/or changed the *world* in various ways; the point, however, is to *begin with oneself*."

II

Gurdjieff, a strange Caucasian mystic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who has been acknowledged by Jacob Needleman, a specialist in religion studies, to be one of the founding sources of the so-called New Religious Movements of the past century, had a lot to say, and theorize, about the inner fragmentation of the human psyche. He was an Ashokh (or Ashikh/Ashegh, meaning lover, as Persian or Azeri speakers know them in the region), but extraordinarily trained with traditional sciences of human psyche, skills of hypnotic conditioning, and also the arts of mystical dance and music. It is sad that we academics sometimes allow "disciplined" vocabularies and labeling practices to exclude many non-academics from entering our theoretical and curricular rooms. Of these limiting and fragmenting architectural practices in our educational landscapes I will say more later. Here I would like to describe how wrapped in all sorts of deliberately constructed mystical sayings, Gurdjieff's theory of the self advocates viewing human individuality not as an assumption, but as a destination of the journey of human life course. Calling humans "three-brained beings," he proposes a view of the person as an ensemble of hundreds if

not thousand of selves, clustered around three main centers of gravity which he labels as physical, intellectual, and emotional centers. The fragmentation of these centers via all sorts of buffers, or what modern psychology would label as “defense mechanisms,” coincides with the fragmentation of human consciousness into its so-called instinctive (or unconscious), waking conscious, and subconscious realms, relatively separate and independent functioning of which allows the possibility and propensity of the organism to become habituated, addicted, and attached to things, to live in illusion, to live in sleep in waking life, to be a machine in human guise, to be a prisoner of an illusively free life.

Using the allegory of a carriage driven by a horse in which the box symbolizes the body, driver the mind, the horse the emotions, and the passenger the master self supposedly in charge of the whole system, Gurdjieff argues that the human organism is often fragmented into a box broken down needing lots of greasing and repairs, the driver mind being almost always sleepy and drunk, the emotional horse wild and out of control with its constant desires for food and sex, and the master passenger literally absent from the scene altogether. The shafts connecting the physical box with the emotional horse, the reins connecting the emotional horse to the driver mind, and the brake lever connecting the driver mind to the physical box, symbolize for Gurdjieff three qualitatively different modes of communication among the three centers of the organism—but these too are broken down and imbalanced, making the person powerless to know and change her or his physical, intellectual, or emotional habits. The organism has been originally designed for supernatural journeys, but is alas broken down traversing wasteful terrestrial byroads. The interstellar transport system that is the human organism is actually so fragmented and absent of singular, individual will, that it confuses any passerby outside or passing

self inside for being its “true self,” letting her or him in as a temporary master passenger, to be soon replaced by another temporary will. In this contemporary so-called “man” in quotation marks, the self that sets the clock at night to get up early in the morning is almost always not the self that actually gets up in the morning, but one who decides to shut the alarm and go back to sleep again. No one knows who or what one really is.

Human alienation for Gurdjieff has a practical and specific meaning, the separation and the alienation of our multiple selfhoods from one another, such that the liberation of the organism must necessarily involve conscious labor and intentional suffering of self-knowledge and transformation by a deliberately evoked and trained, fourth, observing self which is the seat of the future permanent and unified “I.” Only such a unified organism in which the three centers actually communicate and blend with one another really has the right to say “I am” and “I do.” The ordinary human organism does not “do,” things are simply done to her or him. In ordinary everyday life, we all are each “We”s. Multiplicities of selves are not merely maladies of extreme pathological conditions, but a fact of everyday life for each and every one of us, its architecture varying across body organisms depending on their make-up and degree of efforts made in self-knowledge and change. Gurdjieff’s enneagram of 21 human personalities, overly misused and popularized today, is actually constructed to take account of the varied forms of architecture of the inner landscape of selves. The sociologist George Herbert Mead, of course, agreed that in a sense “multiple personalities” are normal. But the difference here is that for Gurdjieff there is no presumption that the internalized selfhoods automatically converge in adulthood to form a unified individual self-identity. For Gurdjieff, actually the opposite happens as a rule, since the very process of

individuation requires the person's own volition to pursue the task of alchemical self-knowledge and change. We of course all know those so-called "mood swings" we encounter in our every day lives, moods which Gurdjieff would literally associate with multiple selfhoods manifesting themselves according to the blind necessities of everyday time and space. In this sense, of course, Gurdjieff's eastern mysticism predicts much of modern sociologies of symbolic interaction including those of Blumer and Mead, predates Goffman's dramaturgical theory of social life as a theater, and in many ways predicts (and I would venture to claim surpasses in all practicality of its healing strategies) much of Freudian theories of the subconscious and modern psychology. Sadly, our eurocentric prisms often prevent us from acknowledging in our cherished academic disciplines the pioneering work of non-westerns.

Gurdjieff's mysticism, as I have understood it, and aside from its otherwise serious problems and contradictions which I have also exhaustively identified in my dissertation, has an important message for our applied and clinical theories of self and social change. This importance is as much about the inner nature of stratification of our assumed and supposed "individualities" into multiple selfhoods, as it is about undermining the very textbook definitions we have about society, and thereby sociology as the study of society. Any sociology textbook today defines society as a system of relationships or interactions among individuals, or groups of individuals. This would be like the early classical scientific view of nature as a system of bodies, of molecules, or at best of atoms. But further insight, as we know, led us to a different view of matter and of nature, as a system of subatomic elements and currents, which established a drastically different view of the universe while subsuming the earlier atomistic view into itself. Likewise, by relaxing our a prior and ahistorical assump-

tions of our unified and singular individualities in favor of recognizing our inner multiplicities, we may be able to form a new definition of society not as a system of individual interactions, but as a system of interactions of multiple selves, products of our contradictory, fragmented, alienated, and stratified socializations, which once formed confront one another as fragmented selfhoods. As Mead has argued, once a self arises from the context of our socializations, it takes a life of its own. There is no reason why the "individual" must be our assumed unit of analysis and point of departure for defining society and social interaction.

If we adopt an alternative definitional framework for society, and thereby of sociology as the study of it, many "social" phenomena that appear as inexplicable become rather easily understood. Our severely depressive mood changes, the loving mothers who suddenly drawn their children in bathtubs, the friendly but unexpectedly homicidal neighbors, the quiet kids who suddenly bomb their classrooms and schools, are not exceptions to our supposedly singular individualities, but extreme examples of our common lot as clusters of multiple and fragmented selfhoods, caught in the illusive shell of our alleged individualities with the aid of equally illusive ideologies of individualism, but in reality living the life of fragmented selfhoods easily manipulatable by all kinds of advertising, television sitcoms, mass media news, and glamour and fashion industries, not to speak of afflictions with all sorts of habituations to food, money, fame, sex, power, wealth, drugs, alcohol, and nicotine substances. Despite its ideological rhetoric, capitalism does not individuate persons, but fragments them into landscapes of fragmented and alienated selfhoods, within and without. Colonialisms do not have to always take place at the macro level of nation-states and civilizations. Imperialism has long discovered, as Michel Foucault has

aptly reminded us, of the micro and intrapersonal industries of control and inner colonialism. “Divide and Rule” is not only useful in classical or neo-, or even post-colonial geometries of nation-states. It also works in the micro geometries of divided and controlled selfhoods. How can we be singularly willful and indivisible “individuals” but not be able even to drop our coffee drinking habits!?

It is the tragic story of modern human organism to be caught in a world-wide colonized web of multiple selfhoods, intra, inter, and extrapersonal, with respect to oneself, to others, and to our natural and built environments. Gurdjieff’s theory, albeit its shortcomings and misuses suffered at the hands of its inventive guru, and despite its mystical religious wrappings and—as in most mystical teachings—dependent and hypnotic modalities of teacher-student relationships, gives us an alternative, eastern, approach to utopistics. Where Gurdjieff fails is the separation and the stratification he introduces between this inner realm of human life and that taking place inter- and extrapersonally in relationship to others and the environment. The interplay of the inner and broader, micro and macro, social stratifications of the human life is thereby ignored in his mystical paradigm. As in most religions, for Gurdjieff the suffering in the broader social life is a given, a fact and fate to be reckoned with as an inevitability against which the human soul is to be tested, purified, and forged towards human inner salvation, in this world and in the thereafter. As Marx focused on the broader sociality and lost sight of the inner sociality of human organism, Gurdjieff loses sight of the broader sociality and the role it plays in the origination and perpetuation of human inner fragmentations and alienations. The self and the world are thereby themselves separated from one another in their respective western and eastern doctrines, each failing to notice and thereby to rectify one or another side of the totality of

human social reality which needs to be criticized in theory and revolutionized in practice.

III

Western utopistics is concerned with how to possess and control the world, being caught in cycles of strivings for private and/or collective possession of its resources, cultural artifacts, and instruments of power. Eastern utopistics, however, in its mystical varieties in particular, problematizes that very possessive attitude towards worldly objects, positing that attachments to the world are not only the root causes of all suffering, but also the impediments to seeking and exercising knowledges that can alone facilitate human spiritual perfection. Karl Mannheim, to whom I turn now, would perhaps argue that each of the above provides only a one-sided perspective on how to pursue the good life, their rational kernels becoming more fruitful when synthesized integratively into optimally rational formulations about the utopistics of self and society. But, how can the utopistics of self and broader social world be forged into a singular theoretical framework?

In my study of Mannheim, I have tried to revisit not only the contributions of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, but also the self-defeating elements of his arguments, in the hope of rescuing the essence of his invaluable insights regarding general conceptions of ideology and “collective unconscious” as the fundamental problem of our age. The “social origins of knowledge” thesis built into Mannheim’s perspective, which was rooted in Marx’s theory of material determination of consciousness, can only thrive in a conceptual and theoretical environment where knowledge is divorced and separated from social existence. If we say social existence determines our consciousness, as stated the thesis of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, this

would turn tautological if we consider our knowledge, our ideas, our culture, to be a part and parcel of that social existence. The dualism of society and knowledge, therefore, in contrast to a part/whole dialectical conception of them, allows a primacy to be attached with one rather than another aspect of the dichotomy. Hence, we have a sociological perspective whereby we always seek to find the “social origins,” not recognizing that our own ideas, views, and cultural artifacts may as well be the origins of old or new and alternative social arrangements. Although Berger and Luckmann’s notion of “social construction of reality” has become a commonsense sociological perspective nowadays, even then we shrug from creative sociological theorizing and practice of alternative and utopistic social arrangements, big or small, under the pretext of engagement in “scientific” study of facts and figures about the reality of our social stratifications.

Despite the above shortcomings, however, Mannheim made a great contribution to the sociological theory of ideology, by introducing his what he called “general conception of ideology,” i.e., the notion that in our socio-political discourses we become increasingly aware that not only our adversaries, but even ourselves are unconsciously biased and thereby ideological. Mannheim advanced the notion that the problem of collective unconscious is the greatest challenge and obstacle in the path of scientific social knowledge and transformation. Thereby, by encouraging sociologists and social scientists alike to turn their gaze as well inward, he introduced a significant self-reflexive element into utopistic theorizing and practice. Nevertheless, because of his all-universal materialist theoretical environment inherited from Marx, his generally “objectivist” social scientific framework, and also his eschewing of the individual as a unit of analysis (given his sociological training and bias) Mannheim in effect disarmed the intellectual from be-

ing personally self-reflective and thus self-transformative. His borrowed “detached intellectuals” theorization was to be sure a self-defeating argument within a paradigm of “social origins of knowledge;” but I have argued that it did not have to be self-defeating in a more dialectical environment in which knowledge is as much the origin of self and social reality as it is its product. Theories of social stratification, if pursued for their own sake, run the risk of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies when applied to everyday social problems and solution strategies. Sociologists as intellectuals, in their teaching and research, no matter how dedicated, may become embroiled so much in interpreting, albeit critically, the stratified class, gender, race, and ethnic nature of capitalist society, that they inadvertently become a perpetuator of them and the belief that there is something to be gained by pursuing upward mobilities in either of its bourgeois or proletarian varieties. It will perhaps take some effort in the sociologies not just of knowledge but of *self-knowledge*, on the part of the academics themselves, faculty or student, to realize that stratifications of our inner and broader social lives are two sides of the same coin tossed around by the Wall Street and Microsoft managers of the postmodern information society.

Social stratification is not simply about the amount of possessions or savings in bank accounts. It is not a state of things, but a relational process taking place without and within. It is about the nature and quality of our experiences as human beings. Social and self stratifications cannot exist apart from one another. To break the chain of our macro social structural slaveries, we cannot jump over our own knees, so to speak, but need to understand and practically change the micro structural slaveries shaping our everyday inner lives and psyches, here and now.

IV

The contested theoretical identities of Marx, Gurdjieff, and Mannheim in search of the good life, eastern or western, are not isolated efforts in world-historical context. On the contrary, as fragmented voices finding their way into our contemporary imaginations they encapsulate the three broad world-historical movements of western utopianism, eastern mysticism, and the academia. Using a nonreductive dialectical conception of world-history in contrast to the conceptions espoused respectively by Marx, Gurdjieff, and Mannheim, I have tried to construct an alternative view of world-history as a grand human architectural project of building inner and global human harmony. World-history is viewed as a long-term and large-scale process of splitting of the intra- and inter/extrapersonal realms of human life into a habituated eastern vs. western civilizational dualism whose transcendence has been, and will necessarily be, dependent upon conscious and intentional creative human effort. World-history is conceptualized as a process of nomadization, ruralization, urbanization, and subsequent rise and disintegration (partly as a result of the first major, Indo-European, nomadic invasions of the south) of ancient civilizations, followed by a long era of imperial reintegrations of the world through increasingly synchronous periods of classical political domination, medieval cultural conversion, and ultimately modern economic exploitation for which the second major (central Asian and north European) nomadic invasions paved the way. The modern world-system is a result not only of the ascendance of an economic form of imperial integration of the world, but of the invention of a new phenomenon in world-history which may best be characterized as “collective imperialism.” Postmodernity and globalization today are expressions of the deepening

structural crisis of the modern world-system of collective imperialism.

Pointing out that world-history has experienced not one, but two major renaissances—during 600-400 BC and A.D. 1300-1500—each of which followed a long and devastating process of nomadic invasions of the south marking respectively the fall of ancient civilizations and the rise of modern economic imperialism, I have argued that the settled-nomadic dialectic in fact lies at the root not only of the north-south, but also of the east-west, nomenclature in world-historical discourse. The by and large failing eastern and western renaissances signified conscious and intentional human efforts at integrating the fragmented philosophical, religious, and scientific dimensions of human creativity which emerged after the fall of ancient civilizations and reinforced by classical, medieval, and modern empires. This fragmentation has essentially involved and perpetuated a dualistic spatiotemporal distancing of the intra- and inter/extrapersonal dimension of social knowledge and transformation, manifested in the lop-sided emergence of oppositional utopian, mystical, and academic traditions in humanist utopistics. The structural crisis of the modern world-system involves both the self-destructive tendency of collective imperialism *and* the potentially self-transforming power vested in human creative powers to invent new humanist renaissances on a global scale capable of critically reintegrating the lopsided utopian, mystical, and academic fragments of humanist utopistics in search of alternative self and broader social systemicities in the midst of the existing order, here and now. In the world-historical dialectics of eastern mystical and western utopian traditions, academia has played a determining role—for better or worse. The failed renaissances of the past also signify failed academic efforts at defragmenting the philosophical, religious, and scientific disciplinarity. A frag-

mented and “disciplined” academia, still in the grips of matter/mind, self/society, and theory/practice dualisms will continue to fail in fulfilling its mission of reintegrating the essentially creative powers of humankind in favor of the good life.

One may view Marx’s western utopianism, Gurdjieff’s eastern mysticism, and Mannheim’s academic sociology of knowledge as mutually alienated and lop-sided philosophical, religious, and scientific fragments of humanist utopistics in modern times. The projection of human creative powers onto “objective laws (or origins) of motion of nature or history,” “supernatural” agencies, or select elites of remarkable intellectuals or party cadres, represents the degree to which the very world-historical agencies for human de-alienation have themselves grown alienated from one another. The failing conscious and intentional shocks of the two major eastern and western humanist renaissances of the 4th-6th centuries BC and of 13th-15th AD in bringing about a lasting dialectical synthesis of the three polarized and failing fragments of utopistic endeavor, I argue, has given rise in the modern period to the “antisystemic” mode of seeking social change which by its very nature of spatiotemporally distanciating the actual means from the promised ends of social change has also proven to be an exercise in failure.

The way out of this world-historical impasse, I argue, is inventing new humanist renaissances involving far-reaching and integrative alternative-“civilizational” dialogues across utopian, mystical, and academic fragments of humanist utopistics. The answer lies in conscious and intentional reclaiming and reconstitution of humanist utopistics—informed by a view of human society as a singular spatiotemporal ensemble of diverse intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal self relations, and exercised by example in the midst of life in the context of creative, self-de-alienating, self-harmonizing, and globally self-expanding move-

ments beginning from the personal here and now. Only through dialectical transcendence of philosophically perpetuated religious vs. scientific teleologies of world-historical change in favor of a conscious and intentional humanist teleology arising from the creative powers of human beings themselves can substantively rational and real advances be made towards building inner and global harmony. “Human architecture” is the art of imaginative design and construction of alternative spatiotemporal dialecticities between the personal self-identities here and now and long-term, large-scale, world-historical change.

In my dissertation I have tried to demonstrate that all philosophical, theoretical, and practical dualisms—which emanate from dichotomizations of reality into matter and mind, and result in alienating self and social knowledges and praxes—can be effectively transcended through their re-articulation as diverse manifestations of part-whole dialectics. Developing and applying an architectural approach to sociology, I advocate the abandoning of “house storeys” and similar metaphors still subconsciously fragmenting psychosociological and historical analyses. The habituated common sense definition of society as “multiple” ethno-national and/or civilizational systems of relations among “individuals”—based on ahistorical presumptions of human “individuality”—is rejected in favor of its definition as a singular world-historical ensemble of intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal self relations. It is argued that human life can be harmonious only when it is a world-system of self-determining individualities. Towards this end, the sociology of self-knowledge is proposed as an alternative research and pedagogical landscape for building de-alienated and self-determining human realities.

The proposed sociology of self-knowledge and human architecture—twin fields of inquiry involving research on and practice of spatiotemporal dialectics between

here-and-now personal self-identities and world-historical social structures—are exercises in applied sociology beginning in the social spacetimes of our classrooms. They are meant to introduce students to applied sociology not simply in theory, but in the practice of their globally self-reflective research as part of their curricular assignments. I use audiovisual media and particularly feature films to evoke not just the intellectual, but also the emotional and sensual selves of students in their learning experience. I have found a reverse micro to macro, present to past, ordering of sociological theories to be an invaluable strategy in exposing students to rather abstract theoretical discussions. Seeing no dualism between teaching and research, I approach teaching itself as a most important exercise in applied sociological research. For me, practicing what C. Wright Mills called the sociological imagination is not simply a motto but is an actual practical guide to be pursued by students first in the laboratory of their global self-research assignments throughout the semester. Examples of students' works chronicled in the journal *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* attest to the plausible value of such a pedagogical strategy in teaching applied sociology across diverse course offerings.

I have argued, more exhaustively in the dissertation and more briefly in the foregoing, that the root cause of practical failures in ending our self and social stratifications is to be sought in the habituated structures of our theoretical frameworks, world-historically inherited in terms of various dualisms of mind/matter, self/society, theory/practice, and east/west. Recognizing the significance of challenges posed by the subconscious as a mediating region between mind and matter, redefining society and sociology in terms of interaction of selves rather than of presumed "individuals," adopting both micro/macro and integrative (not just selective or even eclectic) ap-

proach to various classical or contemporary social theories, and being open to comparative cultural diversity in our theorizing efforts, I argue, would provide a much more fruitful theoretical environment for the advancement of utopistics. To dehabituate from the alienating self and social structures preventing us from achieving social justice, we need to find ways to dehabituate ourselves from dualistic theoretical practices. We do not stand apart from the contested theoretical identities of the good life we have inherited from the past in world-history context; to recognize this and to move beyond contestation in favor of open and detached dialogues would be a prerequisite for bringing about effective change in favor of the good life, without and within.

V

One crowd in religion ponder their way,
One crowd in science supposedly stay,
I fear one morning town crier shouts,
"The way's neither! O gone astray!"

—Omar Khayyam

If anything, Khayyam's quatrain above speaks to the heart of our contested identities in a world-history context. Our contested identities habitually framed in philosophy, religion, and science, have often sidelined art and artistic endeavors from assuming hegemonic standpoints in the formulation of our theories of and strategies for change. Why not stop at this point of interpreting our selves and world in predetermined frameworks and start creating new ones in the here and nows of our inner and interpersonal lives? Really, what makes us not see Omar Khayyam (or Rumi, similarly), for instance, as social psychologists, sociologists, historians, and applied social theorists? Why can't our sociologies and historiographies be poetic, and expressed in diverse art forms? Why do we

not see Rumi, who is more globally popular than ever today, as an applied sociologist, social psychiatrist, and inner and world historian, in his own right? Why should sociology and historiography not be at the same time utopistic in substance, and artistic in form?

The Song of the Reed which opens Rumi's book of spiritual couplets is another voice crying humankind's alienated and contested identities in search of loving reintegration and fulfillment in world-history context. This song with which I would like to conclude my presentation is actually a three-fold song, woven delicately with one another as in a Persian carpet destined for a mystical flight towards the good spiritual life. The meaning, the feeling, and the sensations are the three equally significant and vital elements of the poem, aimed at evoking, awakening, blending, and "cooking" our souls towards the experiencing of inner and global unity that can only be a precondition for experiencing the cosmic self-knowledge sought after in the mystical tradition. The three-foldness of the Song of the Reed is of the essence for the eastern civilizational utopistics of which it is a part. To bridge it with the thoughts, feelings and sensibilities of a western audience engaged in western utopistics of varied kinds—i.e., searching in their own western ways for the good life around the globe and outside themselves—requires not one, not two, but a triple translation of its context, content, and form elements.

Western free-verse translations of Rumi's Song of the Reed miss the whole point of his applied social psychology and psychiatry when they omit its tropological rhyme from its truncated and overrationalised substantive meaning. The song is directed not just to one, but to all the three physical, intellectual, and emotional centers of the human organisms comprising his audience. The meaning of the poem in terms of the alienation of humankind and the need for efforts to give up worldly ha-

bituations in favor of the good spiritual life is of course one of the layers of the poem directed at the intellectual center of our organism, to what comprises our waking consciousness. The reed metaphor, on the other hand, and all the subtle and complex tropological symbolisms associated with the metaphor is directed at our emotional center, speaking to it in terms of the language of visualizations, which is the primary language of communication with our subconscious mind. Finally, the couplet form and rhythm of reed's song as expressed in the poem is a crucial third layer of the poem, directed at our sensibilities of hearing, sight, and movements, aspects of the physical center of our organism. The three-fold nature of the poem in the original is, in short, of paradigmatic relevance to the very thesis of the poem, which is the need of human beings to free themselves from habituations and addictions of the earth in favor of the good spiritual life. It is the fragmented and independent functioning of the three centers in the human organism, and the alienated multiple selfhoods resulting from it, that makes possible the perpetuation of habituated and addictive behaviors in the human organism. Rumi's seeking a "torn-torn, longing" heart is meant to evoke our emotional sensibilities to join the whirling dance of his spiritual journey. His references to the distinction between soul and body, the limits of our ear and tongue and eye sensibilities, are meant to evoke our physical selfhoods to tune in to his reed's song. His evoking our curiosities about his secret is meant to evoke our higher intellectual selves to embark on the journey of cosmic self-knowledge and change.

Rumi's Song of the Reed is not simply preaching to us, but through the actual unfolding of his poem's threefold architecture is participating in helping us transform our identities towards freedom from enslavements to worldly objects. He is speaking not only to our conscious but to our uncon-

scious and subconscious minds, i.e., to the three-fold minds of our intellectual, physical, and emotional selves simultaneously, seeking to tear apart the veils and buffers that separate the three centers from one another and all of them from lessons of world-history, preventing us from realizing the utter sleepiness, imprisonment, mechanicalness, and enslavement of our ordinary lives as alienated selves. The “secret” alluded to in the poem, i.e., the separation of body and soul, the inner alienation of human physical, intellectual, and emotional selves, is the fundamental and paradigmatic essence of the poem, a secret that is paradoxically being given to us on the humble platter of spiritual food by Rumi without our eyes and ears being able to “get the clue,” so to speak. The voice of Rumi is another contesting identity in world-history context whose aim is to do away with contestations altogether in favor of the good life through the unitary experiencing of human and cosmic love.

Imagine a ceremony in the presence of Rumi, where one hears the soothing cries of reeds in the background. Rumi suddenly interrupts them and sings his own reed’s song:

Listen to how *this* reed is wailing
About separations it’s complaining:
“From reedbed since parted was I
Men, women, have cried my cry
“Only a heart, torn-torn, longing
Can hear my tales of belonging
“Whosoever lost his essence
For reuniting seeks lessons
“In the midst of all I cried
For the sad and happy both sighed
“But they heard only what *they* knew
Sought not after the secrets *I* blew
“My secret’s not far from this, my cry
But, eye or ear catch not the light if don’t try
“Body and soul each other do not veil
But there is no one to hear *his soul’s* tale”
What arises from the reed is fire
Whoever lost it, is lost entire
What set the reed on fire is love, love
What rages in reed is nothing but love, love

Reed comes of use when lovers depart
It’s wailing scales tear love’s veilings apart
Like reed both poison and cure, who saw?
Like reed comrade and devote, who saw?
Reed tells of the bleeding heart’s tales
Tells of what mad lovers’ love entails
With the truth, only seeker’s intimate
As the tongue knows only ear’s estimate
Days, nights, lost count in my sorrow
Past merged in my sorrow with tomorrow
If the day is gone, say: “So what! go, go!
But remain, O you pure, O my sorrow”
This water’s dispensable—not for the fish
Hungry finds days long without a dish
Cooked soul’s unknowable if you’re raw
Then there is no use to tire the jaw
Break the chain, . . . be free, . . . O boy!
How long will you remain that gold’s toy?!

Say you have oceans, but how can you pour
All oceans in a single day’s jar, more & more?!

The greedy’s eye-jar will never fill up
No pearl, if oyster’s mouth doesn’t give up
Whoever tore his robe in love’s affair
Tore free of greed, flaw, and false care
Joy upon you! O sorrowful sweet love!
O the healer! healer of ills! love! love!
O healer of the vain, of our shame
O Galen in name, Platonic in fame!

Earth’s whirling in heaven’s for *love*, love
Hills’ whirling round the earth’s for *love*, love
Love’s the soul in hill! It’s *love* in the hill
That brought hill down and Moses the chill!
If coupled my lips with friends’ on and on
I’ll tell tales, like reed, long, long
Uncoupled, though, these lips will cease
Wails Lose tongue, though remain untold tales
When the rose is dead, garden long gone
No canary can recite her song long
The lover is veiled, beloved’s the all
Veil must tear to hear beloved’s call
If you do stay away from love, hear, hear!
Like a wingless bird you’ll die, fear, fear!
How can I stay awake and see the road
If lover’s light shine not on my abode?
Love always seeks ways to spread the light
Why, then, does your mirror reflect a night?
Your mirror takes no tales, if need to know,
‘Cause your rust keeps away all lights’ glow.

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