

## *Freire Meets Gurdjieff and Rumi:*

### **Toward the Pedagogy of Oppressed and Oppressive Selves<sup>1</sup>**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The newly established Social Theory Forum (STF) at UMass Boston, of which this is a first gathering, was conceived for the purpose of fostering and publishing ongoing dialogues within sociology and across the academic disciplines and beyond on the nature, relevance, limits, and prospects of classical and contemporary social theory in the rapidly changing social context of the turn of the twenty-first century. The topic chosen for the first event, “Liberating Social Theory,” was intended to convey a double-meaning: on one hand, that in order for social theory to remain relevant to the new global historical conditions it needs to continue addressing human liberatory themes, for which, on the other hand,

it needs to liberate itself from habituated and outmoded conceptual structures not corresponding to the new world-historical realities at hand. To address these practical and substantive concerns of social theory, it seemed appropriate—especially given the applied nature of the sociology program at UMass Boston—to begin our dialogues with explorations of some immediate pedagogical questions surrounding learning, teaching, and advancing social theory in applied settings. In this context, we hoped that critically drawing inspirations from the works of Paulo Freire, the late Brazilian critical theorist and educator, in the area of educational philosophy and liberatory social pedagogy and praxis would provide a preliminary intellectual scaffolding around which we could begin building our ongoing conversations.

The central question raised by Professor Siamak Movahedi in his opening statement this morning—“Can Social Theory be Liberating?”—is what any scholarly exploration of “Liberating Social Theory” should begin with. Both the practical question of

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whether social theory can be liberating or not, and the substantive question of how, for the purpose, it should liberate itself from outmoded conceptual structures, in other words, should be guided by a scholarly spirit that does not presume any liberatory function necessarily assigned to social theory. Of course we may address this good question with a simple yes or no answer from the outset. But I would like to think that any a priori position on the matter, one way or another, would itself tend to distance us from providing scholarly answers to the question. Responsible scholarship would instead seek plausible answers not in an predetermined fashion but through close and critical examination of historical and/or theoretical efforts previously undertaken. The question is a good one, not because it closes dialogue and thereby freezes pre-existing positions but because it opens new generative themes, questions, and issues to explore in lights of actual practical and intellectual efforts carried out in the past. So my hope also is that this conference and forum as a whole serve not to close the question with which they began this morning, but to continue addressing it in different ways and forms in all the series of future conference-workshops to follow.

Paulo Freire insisted that every new generation must *reinvent* his ideas—as is obviously a task any new generation must perform with regards to its preceding cultural and intellectual heritage. An important component of the Freirean educational heritage, however, is its critical edge towards the word and the world. We would therefore be more faithful to his work if in the process of reinventing him we maintained this critical edge not just towards the world but also towards his own words. One may argue, in fact, that any conformist reading of Freire's thought would serve only to misinvent him in the context of new global historical realities which have undoubtedly outgrown his own contribu-

tions. Freire left a vast legacy of literary and experiential works by and about him that would certainly take as well more than a lifetime to critically reinvent. The modest purpose of the present paper, therefore, is to focus on his path-breaking work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, as a window of entry into the rich legacy of educational philosophy, pedagogy, and liberatory praxis he left behind.

In what follows I will first try to reconstruct the essential argument advanced by Paulo Freire (1921-1997) in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (first published in 1968 in Portuguese, and in 1970 in English). I will then try a critical reassessment of his conceptual structure through a comparative dialogue with the thoughts of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1872?-1949), a Middle-Eastern philosopher, teacher, and mystic whose work I think provides a critically balancing contribution towards the reinvention of Freirean pedagogy in a comparative east-west framework. Following an effort in contextualization of the Freire-Gurdjieff dialogue in terms of the meeting of Newtonian and quantal sociological imaginations for the purpose of development of a pedagogy of oppression, I will close this paper by reciting Rumi's poem "Song of the Reed" as both a theoretical as well as an applied psychosociological exercise in liberatory pedagogy of the oppressed and oppressing selves.

## **FREIRE'S *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED***

For Freire, world-history is a process of humanization, a process in which "unfinished humanity" seeks becoming "fully human." Becoming "fully human" means for Freire becoming a being of praxis, i.e., an integrated being of critical reflection and practical action. A being of praxis is an incessantly liberating organism in that it is ca-

pable and in need of constantly changing both the objective and the subjective conditions of its existence in order to survive. In fact, Freire argues that it is this existentially necessitated transformative power in the human being that distinguishes it from the rest of known nature. Animals can only survive in limited and limiting environments; humankind can and needs to constantly transform the world and itself, through the criticism-action dialectic. In many ways, Freire derives the proposition of human liberatory powers, in theorizing and practice alike, from the human species being—not from a preferential desire imposed on the human organism from without. Liberation is not simply a possibility, but a necessity, for humanity. It is the unity of these capacities of critical reflection and practical action in the organism, in other words, that actualizes a fully human potential; any one-sidedness either way would bring about only “verbalism” on one hand, or “activism” on the other—both equally regarded by Freire as being deviations from the path of humanization.

Moreover, praxis for Freire is not an individual or isolated phenomenon, but a social and collective, and hence inherently a dialogical, process in both its dialectical aspects. In a fully human society, Freire would argue, human beings treat themselves not as things or objects, but as co-subjects, as co-authors, of their common world-history. This co-authorship must necessarily be an intersubjective and dialogical process in both thought and action, i.e., a process whereby people engage with one another in posing problems, in identifying ever-generative and open-ended questions and themes for critical reflection on the nature, causes, consequences and possible future trajectories of those problems, and in taking practical action to resolve the problems and shape reality in ways collectively envisaged—*ad infinitum*. Being fully human means living in an incessantly liberatory process of intersubjec-

tive dialogical praxis, of united critical reflection and applied action. To be human is to be liberating in theory and practice—to be creative.

What does it mean to oppress? What are the characteristic features of an oppressive society, according to Freire? What is the process of liberation from oppressive social conditions? The notion of oppression in Freire is derived directly from his notion of what full humanity is or should be, i.e., an intersubjective and dialogical being of creative and liberatory praxis. To oppress means, for Freire, to prevent humanity or a part thereof from being fully human, i.e., from being creative, a being of liberatory praxis. This is done by splitting, by dividing and separating, the parts which constitute the intersubjective and dialectical human liberatory praxis as a whole. More specifically, the intersubjective, the dialogical, the critical reflective, and the practical active components of the human praxis as a whole are isolated and negated, depriving human praxis of its integral creative and liberatory nature. Some, a majority, are prevented from developing their critical-reflective powers and thereby reduced to beings of isolated and alienated, unreflective and mechanical action, anesthetized into living as things and objects serving to perpetuate and reproduce their oppressive social structures. These dehumanized and alienated “beings for another,” and not “beings for themselves,” are forced directly or indirectly to reproduce and accumulate the material and social conditions for oppressors who assign the capacity of praxis only to themselves. In contrast to the dimension of reducing common folks to beings of pure action and activism as a deviation from their fully human potential, oppressive behavior also reduces yet others, the intellectuals, to verbalism, equally mechanical and anesthetized in character, in order to perpetuate and reproduce the mental conditions of oppressive society through oppressive educational practices. Having

been educated in oppressive educational systems, mainstream teachers and educators themselves pass on their oppressive system-maintaining knowledge to the newly “educated,” thereby perpetuating the status quo.

The splitting of the dialectical opposite capacities of critical reflection and action across separate human organisms, is the fundamental “divide and rule” strategy adopted by oppressors in order to manipulate the population at large for the purpose of perpetuating their own world-historically produced privileged position in society. Invading the class and ethnic culture of the oppressed with their own self-serving oppressive class or ethnic culture and educational behavior, the oppressors help implant in the oppressed (aided by the oppressed’s own unreflective internalizations), oppressor identities in the oppressed. Oppressors see only themselves as beings of praxis, and others as things and objects, material or mental, to be manipulated as tools for the purpose of reproduction of oppressive material, social, and cultural relations. The oppressed persons are often divided and dualized, one self expressing the objective oppressed conditions in which they find themselves, and another self expressing what they imagine and desire to be, at least in the initial phases of their liberatory struggles, the misconceived ideal goal of their liberation—i.e., to become oppressors themselves. It is only through struggle that the oppressed realize, or should begin to realize, that they can only liberate themselves by liberating the whole humanity—and not by promoting themselves to the position of oppressors. The oppressors cannot liberate the oppressed, Freire insists. In his view, it is only the need for liberatory praxis arising from the objective conditions of the oppressed that can generate sufficient momentum and force for the liberation of humanity as a whole, of liberation of the oppressed and the oppressors alike towards the actualiza-

tion of their species being as creative beings of praxis.

In contrast to the problem-posing educational strategy deserving the fully human species, the oppressive educational strategy is styled after what Freire calls the “banking system.” The assumption is that a part of society, as represented by the traditional educators running the oppressive educational system, assumes to have the truth, the knowledge, and wisdom, and assigns itself the mission of implanting it on other parts of society from without. Knowledge production is thereby antialogical in the banking system of education—another way in which a component of human praxis as a whole is isolated and negated. Teachers teach, students learn. Teachers give knowledge, students gain knowledge. The educational process is not seen as a co-authored process in which the teacher-students and student-teachers share a common, problem-posing, problem-researching, and problem-solving, experience. The oppressive educational system thereby serves, not just in substance, but also in its institutional form and structure, to perpetuate and reproduce the alienation and division of human critical-reflective and practical-action powers from one another. The result is that the students, themselves potential future teachers, are reduced to things and objects serving the reproduction of the oppressive educational system in particular, and of oppressive society in general.

For Freire, the liberatory process cannot ignore the alienated and alienating conditions of human labor and praxis already predominant in the oppressive society. The oppressive structures of economy, politics, and culture, and the educational system that reproduces them across generations, inevitably influence the attitudes of both the oppressed and their leadership in the liberatory process. As much as the oppressed are divided, housing oppressor

selves within them, the intellectual leaders who themselves often arise from oppressor classes but awakened to the reality of oppressive society from an intellectual standpoint, carry with them also a divided selfhood, rendering their struggle with the oppressed as a journey full of reactionary hazards. It is for this reason that Freire's model for revolutionary and liberatory struggle is fundamentally dialogical in nature. Freire argues that the radical leaders, in contrast to the sectarian ones, can only fulfill their task if they seek liberation *with* the oppressed, not *for* them. From the very beginning, and not just in the aftermath of a momentary seizure of power, the leaders and the oppressed must engage in dialogical pedagogy and cultural action, jointly co-authoring their liberatory experience as a continual, openly shared, problem-posing, problem-researching, and problem-solving process. It is only this revolutionary model as dialogical cultural action that fosters dialectical reintegration of the previously alienated and split critical-reflective and practical-active dimension of human species being as a being of creative praxis. Rejecting and overcoming oppressive strategies that aim to split their ranks through implanting feelings of mistrust, elitism, arrogance, cult of personality, etc., the joint forces of the oppressed and their leadership cannot help but practice trust, humbleness, and camaraderie towards one another in the liberatory struggle. Freire insists that in the postrevolutionary period, as in the prerevolutionary phase, it will be impossible to engage in dialogue with the oppressors, since the oppressors' inclination has been, and will continue to be, to mistrust and to reject the humanity vested in the oppressed. However, he also emphasizes that the oppressed can only liberate themselves and others in society by putting an end to oppressive social relations in society—not by exchanging positions with their oppressors.

As can be noted from the above recon-

struction of Freire's argument in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the book is hardly one limited only to the critical reexamination and rectification of student-teacher interactions in a classroom setting. The latter subject, which actually comprises only the second (and shortest) chapter of the book, can be understood properly in the context of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed in its totality, i.e., as a dialogical theory and practice of social revolution and liberatory praxis. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* does claim relevance in the narrower field of academic teaching and learning, but only because such an academic concern is a component of a larger call addressed by Freire to the radical left to abandon their elitist, propagandist, sloganizing, communique-writing, and top-to-bottom organizing habits and embrace a praxis of radical social change pivotal to which is the fostering of a dialogical pedagogy of the oppressed. By redefining the liberatory agenda from its very first steps as a dialogical cultural inter/action between the oppressed and the radical intelligentsia, Freire hoped to rectify the errors committed in the past across the sectarian leftist spectrum, encouraging the left to make revolution not *for* but *with* the oppressed in transforming oppressive social relations in favor of social structures more conducive to the actualization of full humanity—positing the pedagogy of the oppressed as a co-authored ongoing work aimed at synthesizing and integrating the dichotomized reflective vs. activist components of liberatory human praxis.

### **GURDJIEFF'S "HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF MAN"**

... to understand clearly the precise significance, in general, of the life process on earth of all the outward forms of breathing creatures and, in particular, of the aim of hu-



man life in the light of this interpretation.” (Gurdjieff, [1933]/1973, 13)

... while I did not arrive at any definite conclusions, I still became clearly and absolutely convinced that the answers for which I was looking, and which in their totality might throw light on this cardinal question of mine, can only be found, if they are at all accessible to man, in the sphere of “man’s-sub-conscious-mentation.” (Gurdjieff, [1933]/1973, 18-19)

I began to collect all kinds of written literature and oral information, still surviving among certain Asiatic peoples, about that branch of science, which was highly developed in ancient times and called “Mehkeness”, a name signifying the “taking-away-of-responsibility”, and of which contemporary civilisation knows but an insignificant portion under the name of “hypnotism”, while all the literature extant upon the subject was already as familiar to me as my own five fingers. (Gurdjieff, [1933]/1973, 19)

It is instructive to compare and contrast Freire’s perspective with the views of the Middle-Eastern philosopher, teacher, and mystic, G. I. Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff, born to parents of Armenian and Greek ancestry living in the Caucasus, grew up in a region long established as a crossroad between a wide array of eastern and western religious and spiritual traditions. Having been deeply influenced during his childhood by the songs and stories recited by his bard father transmitting ancient belief systems and traditions in art forms, Gurdjieff’s upbringing and educational experience was strongly interwoven with an obsessive desire to understand the purpose and meaning of hu-

man life and death on earth. Through painstaking readings and travels to remotest corners of the earth to seek spiritual knowledge and wisdom from a vast array of open and secret esoteric traditions, Gurdjieff developed a highly idiosyncratic but synthetic cosmology, spiritual system, and educational philosophy and practice whose legacy has been preserved in the body of his writings and embedded in the mental and physical movement exercises and emotionally-laden esoteric dances collected during his travels and passed on to his pupils and students. Time and space does not allow a full and detailed rendering of Gurdjieff’s views here.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose at hand I will limit this exposition of Gurdjieff’s views only to those components that are immediately relevant to and shed light on Freire’s philosophy and pedagogy. Therefore, rather than presenting Gurdjieff’s perspective separately in this section, I will try to weave it into a comparative meeting of the two approaches.

As a modern teacher of mysticism, G. I. Gurdjieff is widely credited for having made mysticism accessible to the west and for having been one of the founding fathers of the so-called “new religious movements.” Depending on whether the physical, emotional, or intellectual dimension of human organism is exercised in retreat from social life as the initial launching ground for efforts towards the ultimate goal of all-rounded individual self perfection, broadly three traditional ways of the fakir, the monk, and the yogi were distin-

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1. For those interested, a detailed reconstruction and critique of Gurdjieff’s views based on his primary writings may be found in my work “Mysticism and Utopia: Towards the Sociology of Self-Knowledge and Human Architecture (A Study in Marx, Gurdjieff, and Mannheim)” (Tamdgidi 2002). J. Walter Driscoll, the major bibliographer of sources by and on G. I. Gurdjieff for many decades, has regarded this dissertation as “an original critical assessment of Gurdjieff’s system” (<http://www.Gurdjieff-Bibliography.com/Current/index.html>).

guished from one another by Gurdjieff. Suggesting that these three “ways” to self-perfection are more prone to failure since their trainings take longer (thus often unrealizable during a single lifetime) and thus their retreating adepts become often vulnerable to habituating forces upon reentry into social life, Gurdjieff himself favored an alternative “Fourth Way” school in world mysticism. He characterized this approach as one concerned with the parallel and simultaneous physical, emotional, and intellectual development of individual self knowledge and change to be pursued not in retreat from, but in the midst of, life. In what follows, I will selectively explore five major aspects of Gurdjieff’s teaching in relationship to Freire’s pedagogy.

#### A. *The Problem of Subconsciousness*

Like Freire, Gurdjieff was also concerned with human history as a process of humanization, or with what he called the “harmonious development of man.” However, Gurdjieff’s notion of what Freire would call the state of “full humanity,” i.e., the dialectical unity of critical reflection and practical action, also involves a recognition of the existential and paradigmatic challenge posed by human subconsciousness as a mediating region between matter and mind. There is a crucial difference here which problematizes the very assumed mutual fluidity and translatability of conscious and practical human energies constituting human praxis. In Freire, one is either anesthetized, unconscious, and ignorant, or awakened, conscious, and knowing, and thereby acting—if one wills to do so. In Gurdjieff, one may be critically awakened, say to an oppressive situation within or without, but continue, given the force of subconsciously conditioned habits, to mechanically act as if such critical awareness never even existed. In fact, both theorizing and practice can be subjected to subconsciously grounded habitual forces. The

pedagogical implications of the difference between Freirean dyadic notion of praxis, and Gurdjieff’s triadic notion are noteworthy. It is essential in the Gurdjieffian pedagogy to consciously and intentionally learn and deal with how the human subconscious mind works, how one is habituated, and how one can dehabituate oneself consciously and intentionally.<sup>1</sup> Praxis should not be simply critical and practical, but must be conscious and intentional as well, recognizing the existential and paradigmatic challenge posed by the subconscious habitual forces resisting liberatory critical-practical efforts, both within and without, i.e., in relation to others in collectivity who are themselves also subjected to such subconscious and habitual conditioning. Inter-subjective dialogical interaction which Freire prescribes, in other words, is itself subjected to subconscious habitual fetters. Freirean human praxis cannot really advance without taking human subconsciousness as a central challenge. Human evolution, Gurdjieff taught, is the evolution of its consciousness, will power, and purposeful action; so evolution cannot happen unconsciously, unintentionally, or accidentally (Ouspensky 1949).

To illustrate the significance of the subconscious factor and how it may interfere or compromise the pedagogical process, let me draw from an example from Freire’s own text. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a major, carefully written, numerous reprinted, literary work by Freire as an educator who is particularly sensitive to all kinds of elitist and condescending attitudes by intellectuals towards the oppressed, one would expect a conscious effort on his part to treat the views expressed by the oppressed at least in par with various intellectual sources he meticulously quotes throughout the

1. How Gurdjieff himself used his knowledge of this matter as a “professional hypnotist” in his teaching, is a very important question that I have extensively dealt with in my previous work (Tamdgidi 2002).

text. Freire does an admirable job throughout the text of quoting various peasants already in the process of critical awakening to the oppressive nature of their conditions and the liberatory struggles they need to wage to transform those conditions.

However, while Freire names and fully cites in his book the name of every known or unpublished intellectual and scholar he consults to develop and enrich his own views, there is paradoxically not a single instance throughout the text where any of the "peasants" he quotes from are actually identified with a personal name. The quote is simply credited to "a peasant" here and "a peasant" there—while the context of such citations clearly indicates that Freire was in personal contact with those whose views he integrates into his narrative. This becomes even more surprising, when we find Freire saying, in the same book (p. 175), how the liberatory struggle by the oppressed necessarily involves an awakening from a state of thing-hood to a state of self-awareness as a person, signified by the use of names:

Proposing as a problem, to a European peasant, the fact that he is a person might strike him as strange. This is not true of Latin-American peasants, whose world usually ends at the boundaries of the latifundium, whose gestures to some extent simulate those of the animals and the trees, and who often consider themselves equal to the latter.

Men who are bound to nature and to the oppressor in this way must come to discern themselves as *persons* prevented from *being*. And discovering themselves means in the first instance discovering themselves as *Pedro*, as *Antonio*, or as *Josefa*. This discovery implies a different perception of the mean-

ing of designations: the words "world," "men," "culture," "tree," "work," "animal," reassume their true significance. The peasants now see themselves as transformers of reality (previously a mysterious entity) through their creative labor. ... (Freire, 1970, 175)

In one of his later dialogues with Myles Horton (Horton and Freire, 1990), Freire reminisces about the significance of achieving literacy and the ability of writing one's own name by the awakening oppressed:

Bernice talks about the happiness a woman experienced when she could write for the first time. It is as if I were in Brazil twenty-four years ago. It is as if I were now in Brazil because I am reading now about explosions of happiness among illiterates who have begun to write and to live. It's Latin America also. It's the world. ... (Horton and Freire, 1990, 89)

The moment in which Anna discovered her name has such an importance in our lives. We already forgot that you are Thorsten and I am Paulo. It is obvious for us, but for the illiterate, it's not obvious. She was Anna. She could write "Anna," she found another dimension of herself. She found a piece of her identity. ... (Horton and Freire, 1990, 90)

Given such a critical awareness on the part of Freire of the significance of literacy, words, and names in the awakening of the oppressed from the state of thinghood to the state of personhood and subjecthood, it seems puzzling to find him depriving the co-authors of his quoted text of their proper names, when he does so systematically with well-known or not-so-well-known



theorists, authors, and scholars throughout the text. This example is cited not to question the depth and the sincerity of Freire's lifelong devotion to the cause of the oppressed, but simply to illustrate the significance of the challenge posed by human subconscious and habitual behavior, when in the midst of most careful and conscious authorship of a text about the pedagogy of the oppressed, literary styles are subconsciously practiced "between the lines," so-to-speak, which are at odds with the spirit of the pedagogy advocated at the conscious level in the same book.

Another example may be cited from the very title of Freire's book, actually. The notion of the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" implies, paradoxically, a "banking system" approach in which the oppressed are educated by others. Contrast this to the alternative formulations "pedagogy with the oppressed," "Pedagogy for the Oppressed," or even just simply "pedagogy of oppression" in which a more dialogical, dialectical, or processual notion of the relationship between the educator and the educated is conveyed. This again points, even tangentially, to the need for conscious problematization, in the pedagogical process, of the subconscious factor.

### *B. The Problem of the Three Centers*

The difference between Freire and Gurdjieff regarding the subconscious mind is closely related to and brings up another difference in their conceptions, that related to the three-fold nature of the human organism.

Gurdjieff actually distinguishes between three forms of awareness, the instinctive (or unconscious), the waking conscious, and the subconscious awarenesses which he broadly attributes respectively to the physical-moving, intellectual, and emotional centers constituting the human organism as a whole. However, he also

reminds us that these three forms of awareness are present in each of the three centers. In other words, the physical body is said to be constituted primarily of instinctive, but also of consciously performed, and subconsciously learned/habituated behaviors. Likewise, our intellectual activity is regarded as being predominantly conscious, but also accompanied by instinctive and habitually performed dimensions; and so our emotions are considered as involving mainly subconscious, but also of conscious and instinctive dimensions. These three-fold conceptions of human centers, awareness, etc., are in fact concrete expressions of what Gurdjieff identifies, at the ontological and epistemological levels with the Laws of the Three and of the Seven, which in many ways are quite original and sophisticated renderings in precise mathematical language of what we in our more familiar scholarly vocabularies know as the dialectical method.

Gurdjieff calls the strange creatures roaming the earth "three-brained beings," existentially constituted of three in-born and relatively independently functioning centers whose energies are not automatically blended into one another by nature but require conscious and intentional effort on the part of the human individual throughout her/his earthly lifetime in order to harmoniously develop the organism into a truly individual, indivisible, being. Drawing upon the esoteric teachings he gathered, Gurdjieff used the analogy of a passenger's carriage driven by a horse and driver in order to illustrate the three-part architecture of the human organism. In an ideal state, the master "I" represented by the passenger can effectively communicate and direct the actions of the intellectual driver, carriage body, and the emotional horse, by a functioning mediation of the languages of words (between the passenger and the driver), motion/break lever (between the driver and the carriage), shafts (between the carriage and the horse),

and reins (between the driver and the horse). The ideally developed organism can act in conscious unison, as an indivisible whole, because the forms of consciousness corresponding to the carriage, the driver, and the horse, namely the physical instinctive, the intellectual waking conscious, and the emotional subconscious minds are able to mutually blend into one another at the will of the master "I" represented by the passenger. However, in actual conditions found on earth, Gurdjieff argues, the organism is often excessively alienated and fragmented within to such a degree that the body carriage is drastically out of shape and abused, the driver intellect is in a state of perpetual sleep, drunkenness, and false imagination, and the emotional horse is completely out of control; the supposed master "I," the permanent passenger, is simply not there—the organism takes any passer-by as its "true self," submitting to it for a short while until the next wandering passenger comes along.

Freire is of course aware of the emotional and physical-sensuous dimensions of the educational and liberatory praxis, alongside the more obvious intellectual dimension. His emphasis on the importance of emotions such as love and fear in the pedagogical process point to his awareness of the pre- or post-verbal dimensions of the educational experience. However, the intellectual domain seems to preoccupy his central attention in the pedagogy of the oppressed, the emotional and sensuous dimensions regarded as being aspects contributing to the intellectual learning process, not independently approached as subjects of pedagogical practice. Gurdjieff's "harmonious" pedagogy, in contrast, pays equal attention to the three dimensions, devising specific learning and training techniques that consciously and intentionally target the physical-moving, the intellectual, and the emotional dimensions of the human psyche in turn. Among others, in fact, Gurdjieff was a teacher of esoteric dancing

and inspired the composition of many musical tunes he gathered in his searches. Freire was certainly not involved in this kind of pedagogical praxis. For Gurdjieff, it was absolutely crucial since the harmonious development of all the three physical-moving, intellectual, and emotional centers, to which diverse aspects of fragmented human awareness corresponded, was a paradigmatic essence of his teaching philosophy and pedagogical practice.

The point is, the carriage does not understand the language of words, only of the lever and shafts. The horse cannot understand the language of the words, only of the reign and shafts. Alongside learning the ideas of his teaching and various mental exercises, Gurdjieff devised and applied various physical exercises and emotionally-laden dances on one hand, and physically challenging, real life emotional exposure and learning situations on the other hand, in order to awaken the learner to the habituated and mechanical functioning of all the three centers of her or his organism, as equally important steps towards all-rounded efforts at self-knowledge and self-transformation. He is reported to have actually hired on occasions people with especially aggravating and irritating personalities to roam the school grounds so the students would be able to consciously observe and remain equanimous to the reactions evoked in them towards those persons. And certainly he recognized that each person reacted differently to the same (irritating) stimuli artificially planted in the environment. In fact, using a complex enneagrammatic<sup>1</sup> typology of human beings derived from his theory of human organism as a "three-brained being," Gurdjieff insisted on very specific and individualized system of training for every student.

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1. Gurdjieff's knowledge of the Enneagram has been overly used and often distorted in the self-help and popular psychological literature today.

The implication of this Gurdjieffian pedagogical consideration for the Freirean project is that it highlights the fact that oppressive behaviors on the part of the oppressors, and the behaviors on the part of the oppressed that allow and make possible the perpetuation of oppressive relations in society, are rooted not only in the intellectual center to be simply made literate and knowing, but also and equally in the emotional and physical-sensuous gestures and patterns of behavior of the organism of those involved. Adding to the picture the “cardinal problem” of subconscious habituation present in all centers, the pedagogy of the oppressed, and the struggle against oppressive relations, become a much more complex and multidimensional project than otherwise considered. Objective living conditions of the oppressed and the oppressors, in other words, do not necessarily and automatically translate into their presumed corresponding forms of consciousness. The predetermined notion of class struggle in Freire which may be considered a variant of Marx’s historical materialist method of historical analysis—that objective conditions giving rise in the final analysis to the subjective conditions of class awareness that correspond to those objective conditions—faces a much more formidable set of obstacles for actualization than promised in a straightforward process of honest and well-intended dialogical exchange. Human propensity to physical-sensuous, intellectual, and emotional habituation due to the working of the subconscious mind poses a significant challenge to the pedagogy of the oppressed (and oppressors, one may add), which needs to be addressed directly and explicitly.

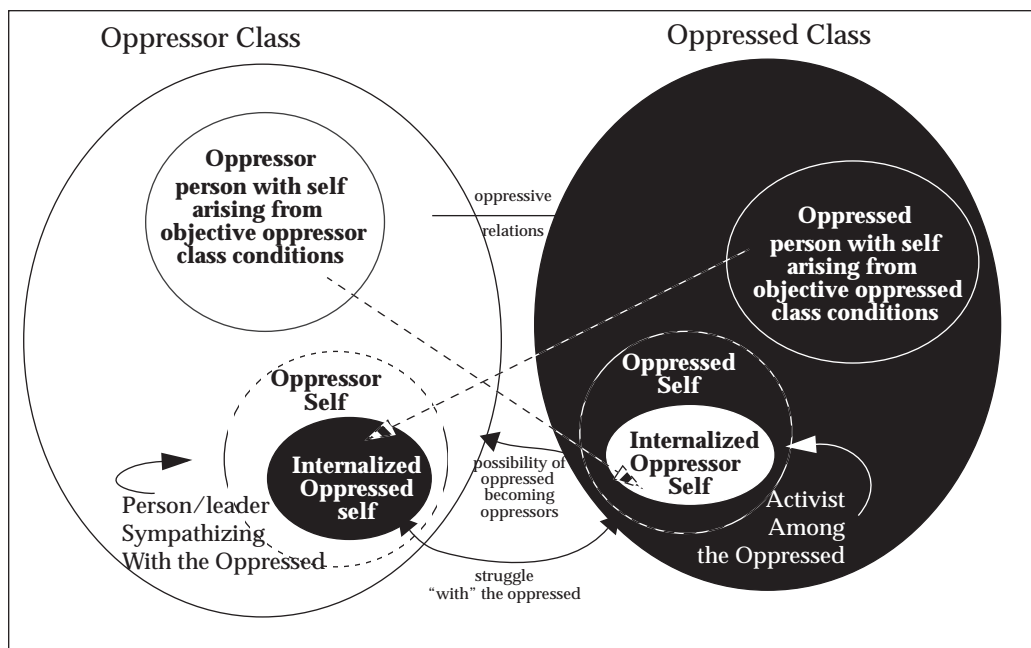
### *C. The Problem of Multiplicity of Selves*

The combination of the fettering force exerted by the human propensity to habituation on the conduct of liberatory praxis, on one hand, and the complexities introduced

by the multiplicity of physical-sensuous, intellectual, and emotional centers constituting that praxis, on the other, point to another important difference between the Freirean and Gurdjieffian pedagogies—that related to the issue of multiplicity of selves.

In Freire, the personal self is a singularity. He of course does recognize, and repeatedly emphasizes, the divided and dualized nature of the oppressed person in oppressive society. Freire does suggest that the oppressed often internalize images of the oppressors within, housing them within as their immediate notion of what their ideal self would be when liberated. He cites this as an example of the tendency of the dialectical poles to become their opposites, rather than forging new syntheses. However, the assumption here is still that of a singular selfhood representing the objective conditions of the oppressed and another representing the internalized (false) identity of their liberated condition, projected from outside. Freire does not explicitly argue in parallel for the divided subjectivity of the oppressor persons; a symmetry is not constructed as such across the oppressive relationship. However, from his recognition that many of the leaders of the oppressed actually arise among the oppressor class, one may deduce that at least some members of the latter, in the course of social struggle, also experience a divided self, internalizing images of the oppressed and their need and desire for liberation. Members of the oppressor class, however, is overall regarded as possessing a monolithic self-structure representing their objective class position, identity, and interests. If we were to draw a diagram of Freire’s conception of the personal self-structures of the oppressed and the oppressors, we may perhaps arrive at an image as presented in Figure 1.

In Figure 1, note the yin-yang structure of the relationship between the emerging

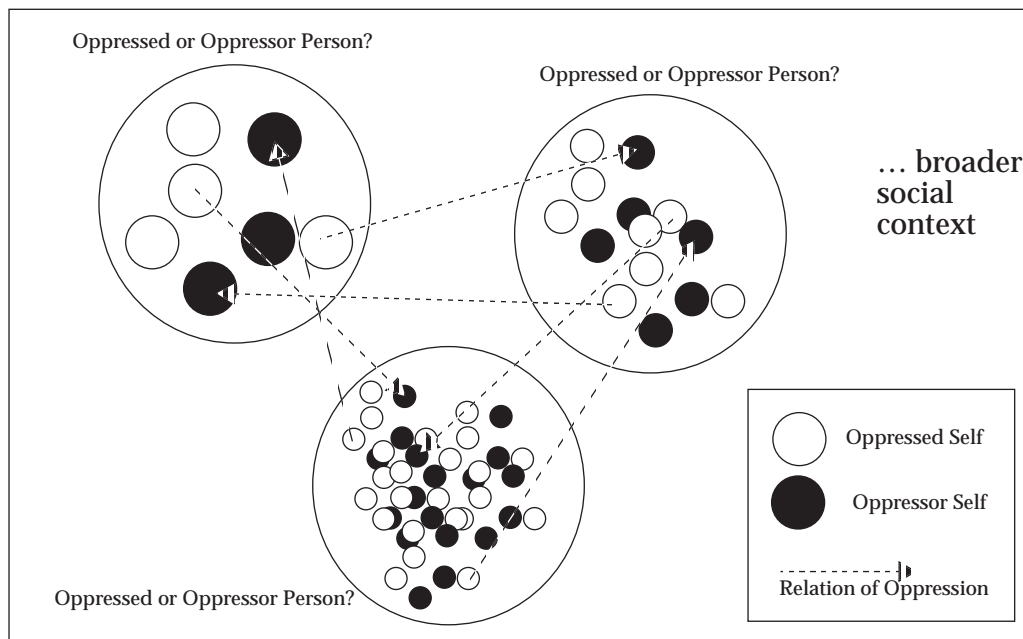


**Figure 1:** Freire's conception of the personal self-structures of the oppressed and the oppressors

intellectual vs. oppressed/activist coalition, where each pole, inheriting self-identities from their objective class membership, internalizes the opposite class self within. The point of the diagram as a whole is to graphically illustrate the ways in which Freire crafts his pedagogy of the oppressed within a materialist conceptual environment that more or less follows the base-superstructure model borrowed from Marx, though with more emphasis on the role played by the cultural and educational sphere in the shaping of oppressive relations and liberatory struggle. The classificatory system of oppressor class members *here* and oppressed class members *there*, identified by their embodiment in separate collectivities of persons, is somewhat elaborated by recognizing the possibility of internalization of opposite self-identities from across the class poles in the course of member socializations and partic-

ipation in the oppressive or liberatory struggles. But the singularity of the individual self is taken as an assumption throughout.

Here is where another significant distinction between the Freirean social psychology and that implied in Gurdjieff may be discerned. In Gurdjieff, in actual conditions of every day life the individual is found to be a legion of "I"s, a multiplicity of selves, each of which manifests particular forms (and degrees of solidification and crystallization) of habituated physical-sensuous, intellectual, and emotional characteristics. Beyond the false appearance of singular atomic bodies and persons, there is a sub-atomic social structure of fragmented selfhoods whose particular structures, gravitating more or less to one or another of the three main physical, intellectual, or emotional centers of the organism, renders a much more complex, sub-atomic picture



**Figure 2:** Hybrid Oppressed and Oppressor Persons in Oppressive Society

of personality structures that are too idiosyncratic to make it possible to classify the person as a whole in one or another larger scale social classificatory scheme. In the Gurdjieffian sociology, it is possible for a person to possess, and have internalized, a wide variety of what Freire would call oppressive and oppressed selves at the same time. A person may be rich, say a rich mother in a well-to-do household, yet have internalized numerous oppressed selves in terms of say gender, ethnic, or age characteristics. A worker may be quite oppressed at work, but quite an oppressor at home. The worker does not potentially become an oppressor in the aftermath of a momentous revolution, but may actually become so at the very same time in everyday life when he or she is also oppressed.

If we were to draw a diagram of this situation, it would perhaps resemble one represented in Figure 2. Here, a close up of three persons in oppressive society, we may find a sub-atomic, sub-individual, social

structure where a person may be both oppressed and oppressor. The larger grouping of what an oppressed or oppressor “class” is may be different, depending on what form of oppression is taken into consideration (work, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, belief, sexuality, handicap, ...). Depending on the degree and extent of socialization, also we may find much simpler or more complex, more or less fragmented intrapersonal self-structures across persons.

The unique nature of personal histories related to the development of multiple selfhoods found in assumed “individuals,” in other words, would make it impossible to develop an adequate understanding of the person without significant, conscious and intentional, effort on the part of persons to understand their own selves and self-structures in the process of liberatory struggles. Each person, potentially having the most access to her or his own personal memories, histories, every day interactions both within and without, is empowered in the



Gurdjieffian pedagogy to seek liberatory self-knowledge and change as a fundamental precondition and prelude towards the liberation of others—to whatever extent possible.

#### *D. The Problem of Intra- vs. Inter-personal Oppression*

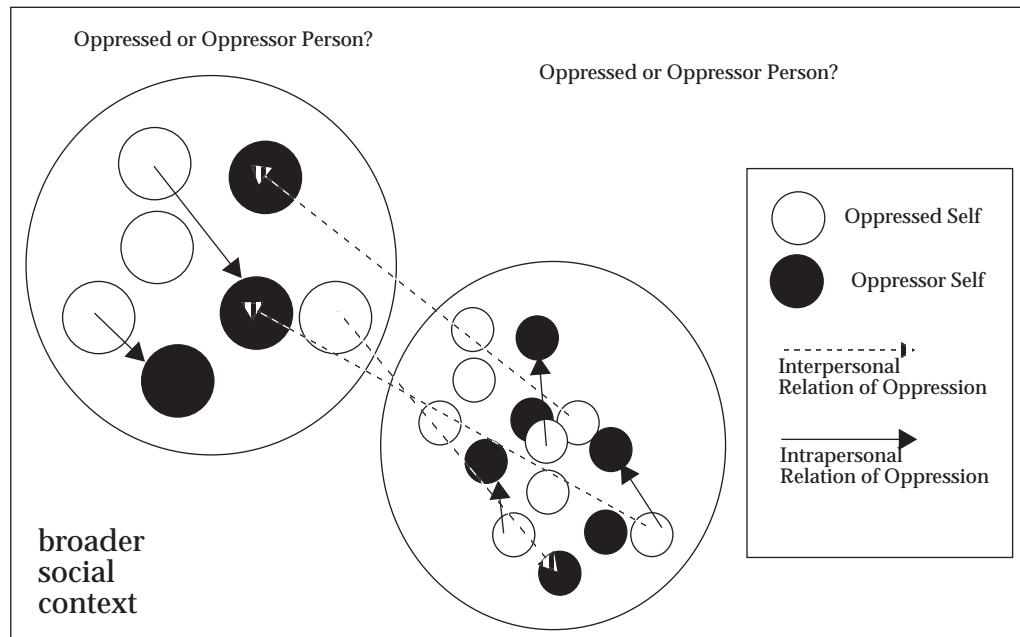
This is where another, and one may conclude to be the most important, distinction between the Freirean and Gurdjieffian pedagogies can be discerned: the distinction of inter- vs. intrapersonal oppression, the possibility of personal self-oppression.

A close and careful reading of Freire's text shows that he tries, implicitly and at times even explicitly, to divert attention from the need for personal self-knowledge and change. For Freire liberation is "not a self-achievement, but a mutual process." Persons liberate one another in a mutual struggle, since oppression itself is perceived and noted in its interpersonal form only. It is not just that in Freire there really is not a conception of multiplicity of selves in the person. In the cases of divided and dualized persons which he does recognize, the relationship is almost always considered in its interpersonal dimension. This is apparent in Figure 2 above, where, if considered closely, one notes that relations of oppression are all interpersonal, across bodies. For instance, consider the fact that when Freire points to the situation where a peasant houses the image of his oppressor boss within as an ideal of his future liberated situation, the implications of this is noted only in terms of what the peasant would or would not do to *others* if and when he finds himself in the pre- or post-revolutionary struggle. The question is not posed in terms of *intrapersonal* dimension of oppression, of what an oppressed person does to her/himself, or what an oppressor person does to her/himself. Because oppression is always perceived in its interpersonal

form, it is no wonder that Freire sees it, and the liberatory praxis itself, only in its "mutual" interpersonal form, and thereby not only ignores, but often discourages efforts made in personal self-knowledge and change—of course not as an exclusive effort, but as a complement to the interpersonal dimension of liberatory struggle against oppression.

Gurdjieff's conceptual structure, however, makes it possible to envisage intrapersonal oppressive relations. This is depicted in Figure 3. This conception makes it possible to take into account the possibility that a person may occupy multiple positions on both ends of oppressive relations in society without and within; in one, he or she may be oppressive, in another oppressed, and yet in another, he or she may actually oppress him or her self, through practices which *may*, theoretically speaking, have relatively little to do with interpersonal social relationalities. A "looking glass self" dynamic may be at work, for instance, where the person continues to demean him or herself simply because of a misinterpretation or misimagination of a comment heard from a parent. The self-oppression would be a real result, the lowering of self-esteem may be an actual fact, but may be found to be, upon closer analysis, to be a unique experience made by the person whose knowledge and healing may only be possible, in the final analysis, through the person's own efforts at seeking self-knowledge.

In the Gurdjieffian pedagogy, the sociality of oppression is not seen purely in interpersonal, but as well in intrapersonal dimensions. The unique terrain of personal inner landscapes, often inaccessible to others interpersonally, is much more seriously taken into consideration in the Gurdjieffian pedagogy. In Freire, dialogical praxis is seen only in its interpersonal form; in Gurdjieff the intrapersonal realm is a central area of investigation in the course of personal self-observation, self-remembering,



**Figure 3:** Intrapersonal Oppressive Relations

and external considering—i.e., the pedagogical strategies he proposes as dimensions of efforts in personal self-knowledge and self-change. In fact, the lack of conversation, or the ability to converse, across the physical-sensuous, intellectual, and emotional centers, constitutes for Gurdjieff a fundamental cause of personal inner fragmentation and self-forgetfulness, and lack of ability by the organism to know and master its own praxis. The lack of inner dialogue and dialogical interaction among multiple selves habitually imprisoned by the imbalanced and alienated workings of the centers, in other words, is what fundamentally precipitates the inner division which Freire may consider as another manifestation of the “divide and rule” logic that allows the person to be oppressed in the first place. This may better explain, then, why in the same oppressive situations, some may decide to conform, and others resist and opt to change the oppressive situation. Only a pedagogical strategy that dialectically articulates both the intra- and

interpersonal dimension of oppressive and liberatory praxis can arrive at a full and concrete understanding which may produce real emancipatory results.

### *E. Disempowering the Oppressor Status*

A final significant difference between the two pedagogies, and this may challenge the heart of what Freire’s pedagogy of the *oppressed* sets out to do, is that Gurdjieff disempowers the privileged in assuming that they are themselves masters of their lives and social destiny. A majority of Gurdjieff’s pupils, interestingly enough, were people of privilege, status, fame, and power, who had otherwise come to see the painful reality of the meaninglessness, alienation, and powerlessness of their own lives.<sup>1</sup> In Gurdjieff, oppression, which he may define in terms of what leads to prevention of the ability of the organism to “do,” to be able to blend human physical, intellectual, and emotional energies as preconditions for creative human praxis, is equally absent in

most members of society, oppressed or not. That the oppressors assign to themselves the privilege of praxis, does not really mean they have it. By subconsciously assigning the privilege of praxis to the oppressors, Freire in effect gives them a credit they may not deserve.

The most valuable contribution of the Gurdjieffian pedagogy is its personally self-reflexive nature, encouraging us to realize that at the very same time we judge and study others for being oppressor or oppressed, or not, at the same time we think we are teaching others about the evils of oppression across class, gender, ethnic, etc., lines, we subconsciously and habitually practice it nevertheless, and we do so not just in our relations with others, but even more paradoxically to our own selves, every day, here and now.

The Freirean notion that only the oppressed can liberate themselves and society as a whole is framed in a Newtonian sociological framework in which oppressive and oppressed agencies are easily separated as bodies from one another and classifiable in separate camps. A quantal sociological imagination does not necessarily negate the notion that only the oppressed need and seek to liberate themselves; the difference here is that those agencies are no longer assumed to be mechanically separable across bodies, but are found to be intricately crisscrossing one another across and through social bodies of divided, multiple, selfhoods. This provides a much richer, dialectical, and dialogical sociological landscape to study and practice liberatory pedagogy,

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1. Even the young Marx of 1844 recognized this dual nature of alienation in class society: "The possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, experiences the alienation as a sign of *its own power*; and possesses in it the *appearance* of a human existence. The latter, however, feels destroyed in this alienation, seeing in it its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence. (Tucker 1978:133)

for in this alternative view, all are populated by both oppressive and oppressed selves, if we care to see ourselves as who and how we really are, not as how we like to be. Pedagogy of the oppressed, then, would transition into a broader pedagogy of oppression, a pedagogy of the oppressed and oppressive selves.

## **FREIREAN AND GURDJIEFFIAN PEDAGOGIES: TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS OF NEWTONIAN AND QUANTAL SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATIONS<sup>1</sup>**

In the preceding discussion, my efforts were focused on setting forth those aspects of the Gurdjieffian pedagogy which in my view may help enrich and complement the Freirean approach. However, it is also important to consider the limits of Gurdjieff's approach and the inspirations which may itself draw from the Freirean formulation. Again, space does not allow me to fully explore this question here, but as brief as it may be, I find it necessary to dwell on this question as an opening to some broader conclusions to be drawn regarding the comparative meeting of the two pedagogies.

Gurdjieff's pedagogy helps to fill a significant gap in the Freirean approach, by drawing attention to the habituation factor in human organism, the division and fragmentation of physical, intellectual, and emotional centers, the multiplicity of personal selfhoods, and the intrapersonal dimension of human oppressive relations—all of which point to the significance of the

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1. For a fuller treatment of my distinction between Newtonian and Quantal sociological imaginations see "Rethinking Sociology: Self, Knowledge, Practice, and Dialectics in Transitions to Quantum Social Science" (Tamdgidi 2004).

central emphasis he lays on the need for conscious and intentional efforts on the part of the individual to know and transform her/himself. Gurdjieff of course was aware of and did emphasize the collective nature of the liberatory struggle to know and change oneself. His emphasis on “schools” and the need for students to help one another in the practice of various pedagogical techniques of learning and transformation points to the fact that his vision and pedagogy was not a purely introspective paradigm. I have even argued elsewhere (Tamdgidi 2002) that in his writings one may find a macro vision and recognition of the need to bring about fundamental transformation of inherited societal conditions which have precipitated the mechanization, anesthetization, and imprisonment of human life.

However, I have also pointed to the limits of Gurdjieff’s pedagogy in recognizing the social structural forces which also constitute what he naturalizes and essentializes to be an existential inner condition of alienation and fragmentation of the human being. Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed, as one-sided as it may be regarding the interpersonal dimension of oppression and liberatory struggle, does complement Gurdjieff’s cosmology and pedagogy in recognizing the constructed nature of the alienating broader social condition world-historically inherited and constantly reproduced in everyday life. Interpersonal and intrapersonal pedagogical strategies as espoused by Freire and Gurdjieff can only reinforce and enrich one another in forging a dialectical and dialogical cultural synthesis necessary for learning, teaching, and advancing liberatory social theory in applied settings.

I have also distinguished (Tamdgidi 2004) between what I call Newtonian and quantal sociological imaginations, and have argued for the need to forge a singular imagination which articulates the two mac-

ro and micro views of self and society into a singular framework. The dialogical meeting of Freirean and Gurdjieffian pedagogies provide another opportunity for the recognition of the distinction between the two imaginations, and for the forging of the two into a common framework which, for the purposes at hand, may be characterized as a pedagogy of oppression (not just of the oppressed), directed at both the oppressed and oppressing selves alike, considered intra-, inter-, and extra-personally (with respect to the natural and built human environments—i.e., how we oppress ourselves by destroying and abusing the natural and built human habitat).

The sociological conceptual environment informing Freire’s pedagogy is Newtonian. In this classificatory environment, society is divided into oppressive and oppressed classes, themselves comprised of collectivities of persons possessing singular oppressive or oppressed selves emergent from objective conditions of their social lives. Freire does recognize the yin-yang dialectic of identities in the course of oppressive and liberatory interactions across class lines. He does recognize that oppressed persons often internalize (and “house”) oppressor identities, and oppressor persons may internalize (and “house”) oppressed identities (such as in leftist leaders sympathizing with the cause of the oppressed). However, the “billiard ball” Newtonian modality of the oppressive society at large is retained, to the point where only the oppressed are assigned the historical mission of social liberation because of the objective conditions of their lives producing the need, the motivation, and the will, to liberate themselves, and with it, society as a whole. The schema is a deterministic schema, more or less constructed using the Marxist historical materialist method, with an added useful emphasis on the part of Freire regarding the dialectical interaction of the cultural and educational superstructure on the course of objectively given so-

cial oppressive vs. liberatory social practices.

There are numerous occasions in which Freire's theoretical schema implies and prescribes predictability in the pedagogy of the oppressed. When he says that only the oppressed (meaning only a part of society) can liberate society as a whole (and thereby the ex-oppressors, by implications)<sup>1</sup>—a proposition which, in many ways, contradicts his otherwise stated proposition that human liberation cannot be given as a gift to others, but mutually produced—Freire is setting up and imposing a deterministic Newtonian modality on the course of struggle which in a way may act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. To say and act upon the notion that history of the world has been a history of class struggle, which Marx and Engels did, and more or less Freire ascribes to, could be, true or not, a force which may turn history into one of class struggle interpreted using a particular sociological and classificatory model whereby classes are seen as collectivities of human persons sharing a common objective position in relations of material relations and subjective organization corresponding to that position. Such a deterministic model can easily assign a person to this or that class, and thereby predict a particular mode of behavior in society, and in social liberatory struggles, derived and deduced from that model. The Newtonian objects of Freirean pedagogy remain persons, and collectivities of persons, whose behavior are more or less predictably derived from the dialectical materialist modality borrowed from the Marxist doctrine.

Gurdjieff's pedagogy, although also Newtonian in many respects (such as with regards to its law-based religious cosmology of creation and maintenance of the universe), at the micro level advances a

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1. For my critique of Marx's theory in this regard and his theory of proletarian revolution in general, see Tamdgidi, 2002.

perspective which is more akin to a quantal sociological imagination. His emphasis on human conscious intentionality as the core of his evolutionary requirement and the corresponding problematization of human propensity to habituation (which implies a problematization of mechanicality, predictability and predetermination of human behavior), his problematization of the "individual" as a singular unit of analysis and advocacy of sub-atomic vision of the person as a fragmented landscape of multiples selves, his resulting paradigmatic emphasis on the need for conscious and intentional efforts on the part of the individual to know and change her/himself as preconditions for a broader collective liberatory project—all point as elements to a potential quantal psychosociological imagination which fruitfully challenges and complements the model used in Freirean pedagogy.

Using Gurdjieff's scheme, we can begin to envision oppressive social relations not in terms of monolithic or at most dualized personal selfhoods, but in terms of social relationalities of diverse intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal (in relation to nature and the built environment), kinds. Persons would house many more than one or two selves; they are seen as legions of "I"s, resulting from more or less alienating and fragmenting process of primary and secondary socializations in the midst of equally divided and conflicted social contexts. Their self-structures, more or less disintegrated, would manifest diverse tendencies of often contradictory behavior that cannot easily be predicted using simplistic macro theoretical models. We may find the same personal self oppressive towards another person, but oppressed in relation to another person's self—here and now oppressed, there and then oppressor. The person may actually oppress him/herself, and allow her/himself to be oppressed by others and society at large, but at times may also have its own relatively indepen-



dence in relation to the surrounding social environment. If oppressive relationships are reconceived in the rich variety of their intra-, inter-, and extra-personal forms, it would be impossible to easily classify one or another person as being oppressed or oppressor and thereby predict predetermined behaviors from them apart from inductive and phenomenological efforts on the part of those persons in concrete dialogical situations within and without.

The point here is not to discard the macro Newtonian theoretical structures that inform Freire's pedagogy, but to begin using them critically with constant reflective concern about the applicability of their sweeping generalizations in concrete interactions of everyday life. The macro theoretical propositions would be used as such, as mere propositions and hypotheses, in the conduct of concrete everyday efforts in studying and transforming oppressive relationships. The oppressive tyranny of large-scale and all-encompassing sociological imaginations are thereby replaced with a self-critical and reflective use of all available social theories, concepts, and perspectives for a better understanding of the minute ways in which oppressive society perpetuates and reproduces itself within and without. Pedagogy of the "oppressed," would thereby give way to a more flexible formulation of the pedagogy of "oppression" whereby the oppressive relations are reconceived in terms of the relationalities of oppressive and oppressed selves, selves that may reside simultaneously within and across easily discernible bodies. Pedagogy of oppression will direct the attention of all, and not just the oppressed, to the alienated, mechanical, anesthetized nature of their own inner and outer lives, and fuel a self-reflective and self-practical need, motivation, and will in each to question the oppressive nature of society as particularly experienced by the person in the unique conditions of her or his intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal selfhoods.

The preliminary answer we may arrive at as a result of the above discussion to the question "Can Social Theory be Liberating?" may be that it may be useful to bring under scrutiny the assumed predictability implicit in the question itself.

### **CONCLUSION: RUMI'S "SONG OF THE REED" AS A PEDAGOGY OF OPPRESSION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Our predictable and predetermined Newtonian sociological imaginations may not allow us to note the diverse creative forms in which social theory may be theorized and practiced in applied settings. Theories, in our habituated sociological imaginations, are sets of abstract, dry, and formulaic propositions that aim to help us interpret, explain, predict, and at best transform social realities in which we find ourselves. It may seem odd that we would perceive, say a poem, as a theoretical construct, and even more so, its recitation as an exercise in learning, teaching, and advancing social theory in applied settings. The deterministic and lawful notions of reality built into our scientific ideologies, whose alienation from the humanities and the arts itself may be regarded as a large-scale institutional manifestation of our intellectual and cultural alienations and oppressions, does not allow us to see how simple works of art, such as poetry, may have the power to motivate and help us know and change ourselves in unpredictable ways, whether or not we have been engaged in oppressed and/or oppressive behaviors in our everyday lives.

In closing, I would like to draw upon and recite the example of Rumi's "Song of the Reed" which usefully illustrates the way in which a poem can simultaneously advance our theoretical visions while influence our emotional and physical sensibilities in the

applied setting of a conference gathering such as this. Rumi's Song of the Reed, the opening poem of his vast collection of mystical tales rendered in couplet form, tells the story of each of us as allegorical reeds separated and alienated from the reedbeds of our humanities within and without. The substantive content, its tropological form, and its rhythmic sound, establish a multiple dialogical interaction with our intellectual, emotional, and sensuous selves, in order to engage the whole of our organism to awaken to the mechanical and habitual conditions of our earthly lives and seek liberatory self and broader social knowledge and transformation.

### *Rumi's Song of the Reed*

Listen to how *this* reed is wailing;  
About separations it's complaining:

"From reedbed since parted was I,  
Men, women, have cried from 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 lack the light to seek and try.

"Body and soul each other do not veil  
But there is no one to hear his soul's tale."

What blows in reed's not wind, but fire;  
Whoever lost it, is lost entire.

What set the reed on fire is love, love;  
What brews the wine entire is 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 devout who saw?

Reed tells of the bleeding heart's tales,  
Tells of what mad lovers' love entails

With the truth, only the seeker's intimate,  
As the tongue knows only the 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—but 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.

(pause)

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 and 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 the healer of pride, of our shame!  
O Galen in name, Platonic in fame!

Earth's whirling in heavens for love, love;  
Hill's whirling round the earth for love, love.

Love's the soul in hill. It's Love in the Hill  
That brought the Hill down and Moses the chill.

If coupled my lips with friend's on and on,  
I'll tell tales, like reed, long, long.

Uncoupled, though, these lips will cease wails,  
Lose tongue, though remain untold tales.

If the rose is dead, garden long gone,  
No canary can recite her song long.

The lover is veiled; beloved's the all.  
The veil must die to hear the 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 you need to know—  
'Cause *your* rust keeps away all lights' glow.

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