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Anzaldúa's Sociological Imagination

Comparative Applied Insights into Utopystic and Quantal Sociology

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Abstract: Anzaldúa's liberatory social theorizing and praxis are centrally inspired by the notion of the simultaneity of self and global transformations. In this article, I explore how Anzaldúa develops and applies her approach through the writing of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). I will begin by noting that for Anzaldúa, the transformation of self/world essentially involves the task of healing/transcending/bridging a vast array of habituated dualisms deeply ingrained in our personal and global landscapes. I will use C. Wright Mills's notion of the sociological imagination, and Gurdjieff's view of the human "individual" as a "three-brained being" and site of multiple selves, to frame and provide a preliminary answer to this question of what is so transformative and energizing in Anzaldúa's work. I will close with the relevance of the foregoing to the new agenda advanced in my work in the frameworks of human architecture, sociology of self-knowledge, and utopystics, as methodological, theoretical, and historical-practical exercises in imaginative applied sociology—one that dialectically engages both micro and macro, quantal and Newtonian, sociological imaginations in favor of simultaneous self and global transformations. The creative/poetic exercise of self-knowledge and transformation in an increasingly global and world-historical context is a *human right*, and awareness of and training in it must be a fundamental "Gen Ed" requirement comprising any serious liberal arts education in our colleges and universities.

The pull between what is and what should be. *I believe that by changing ourselves we change the world, that traveling El Mundo Zurdo path is the path of a two-way movement—a going into the self and expanding out into the world, a simultaneous recreation of the self and a reconstruction of society. And yet, I am confused as to how to accomplish this.*

—Gloria Anzaldúa (in Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981:208)

INTRODUCTION

It was six years after the renowned cultural theorist and spiritual activist Gloria Anzaldúa published the above words in her co-edited collection with Cherríe Moraga (1981) that her *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* appeared in 1987. In this article, I aim to explore how Anzaldúa's theorizing and praxis in *Borderlands* signi-

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fies important steps toward the resolution of the confusion she expressed in 1981 regarding the simultaneity of self and global transformations as a liberatory social theorizing and praxis. *Borderlands*, in other words, does not only resolve the confusion in theory, but is itself a practical step in and an applied demonstration of the resolution. This, I will note, may explain why Anzaldúa's self-work in *Borderlands* became world-changing, judging from the impact she made on those whose thought and lives she touched in subsequent years and is still unfolding.

I will begin by noting that for Anzaldúa, the transformation of self/world essentially involves the task of healing/transcending/bridging a vast array of habituated dualisms deeply ingrained in our personal and global landscapes. This study explores the nature of the specific strategy Anzaldúa adopts in taking up this enormous task, and what makes her "work" so demonstrably influential and energizing.

Contrasting the Anzaldúan sociological imagination with that of C. Wright Mills, I will propose that Anzaldúa goes far beyond transcending the dualism of personal troubles and public issues, and consciously confronts the task of transcending a series of other equally significant dualisms fragmenting the human liberatory project. These dualisms include those pertaining to theory/practice, cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, cross-movement, and cross-linguistic borderlands, as well as the borderlands of anti/othersystemic movement strategies and the stylistic (poetry/prose) borderlands targeting conscious and subconscious (rational vs. emotional and sensual) modes of awareness and communication. I will argue that the utopystic (integrative utopian, mystical, and scientific) elements in Anzaldúa's sociological imagination provide her with both the diverse comparative cultural resources and conceptual innovations that render the simultaneous self/global transformative task plau-

sible and effective—as demonstrated by the transformative power of her own writing.

However, critically drawing upon the work of the Middle Eastern philosopher and mystic, G. I. Gurdjieff—who insisted on viewing the ordinary "individual" as a "three-brained being" and a fragmented multi-selved landscape, and thereby calling for a radical pedagogy of self-knowledge and self-transformation in favor of individuating human development as part of a broader human liberatory agenda—I will also note that Anzaldúa's strategy can further be justified and enriched by consciously taking account of how she transcends the dualism of self and society itself by way of adopting a, what I have called, quantal in contrast to Newtonian view of society and sociology.

I use "quantal" to refer to a new sociological imagination which treats society as an interactive system of sub-atomic selves rather than of presumed atomic bodies/individuals. In quantal sociology, self is treated as a social relation, and social relations as diverse forms of intra- (inner), inter- (across bodies), and extrapersonal (in relation to built and natural environments) self-interactions. If my relation to you is not seen as also a self-relation, but one labeled as "social" and signifying a relation to an "Other," or, conversely, if my relating to myself is treated not as a social relation (perhaps to a multitude of alienated inner "Others") as well but one built in contradistinction to it—i.e., merely as a "self" relation—such a perspective itself may be regarded as a socially and historically constructed mode of relating that dualizes Self vs. Other and contributes to the possibility of imperialism and oppression.

Transforming oneself from a colonized landscape of divided-and-ruled multiple selves serving imperialism into an integrated self-determining individuality in favor of a just global society, therefore, is not only a necessary step to broader global transformation, but is an exercise in global transfor-

mation in and of itself. Borderlands, left to their dualistic landscapes serving imperialism, are breeding grounds for fragmented, alienated/ing multiple selfhoods, individually and collectively. Bridging involves conscious and intentional/willful efforts at integrating the colonized selves in favor of a just global society conceived as a world-system of self-determining individualities.

The recasting of the self-society borderland itself in terms of part-whole dialectics helps transcend the dualism of self and society which feeds the apparent paradox of the simultaneity of self and global transformations thesis—hence resolving the “confusion” Anzaldúa speaks of when developing and applying her theory. Not all self-works become globe-transforming, however. What makes Anzaldúa's efforts successful is that her imaginative sociological transcending of the self/society dualism is embedded in a relentless and perpetual holistic questioning and transcending/bridging of all other dualisms fragmenting the human liberatory project. It is this “nuclear” energy released from the collision/fusion of diverse world-historically inherited quantal selves in Anzaldúa that renders her strategy so influential and cathartic—following, perhaps differently, other examples one may find in the world's mystical, utopian, and scientific traditions (as found in Buddha, Gandhi, and the young Marx, among others).

I will close with the relevance of the foregoing to the new agenda advanced in my work in the frameworks of human architecture, sociology of self-knowledge, and utopistics, as methodological, theoretical, and historical-practical exercises in imaginative sociology—one that dialectically engages both micro and macro, quantal and Newtonian, sociological imaginations in favor of simultaneous self and global transformations. The creative/poetic exercise of self-knowledge and transformation in an increasingly global and world-historical context is a *human right*, and awareness of and training in it must be a

fundamental “Gen Ed” requirement comprising any serious liberal arts education in our colleges and universities.

ANZALDÚA ON THE SIMULTANEITY OF SELF AND GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Anzaldúa's insistence on liberatory global change via radical self-knowledge and transformation is not an anecdotal or passing episode in her work. It is a continuing and central hypothesis that significantly inspires her *Borderlands* and later writings and sheds light on and informs much of her literary laboratory and social praxis. Anzaldúa reminds her readers emphatically again of this, her conviction, in *Borderlands*:

My “awakened dreams” are about shifts. Thought shifts, reality shifts, gender shifts: one person metamorphoses into another in a world where people fly through the air, heal from mortal wounds. I am playing with my Self, I am playing with the world's soul, I am the dialogue between my Self and *el espíritu del mundo*. I change myself, I change the world. (1987: 71)

She further writes:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real”

world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (Anzaldúa, 1987:87)

In order to understand the paradoxical nature of this simultaneous “work” on self and global transformation(s), it is crucial to understand the paradigmatic significance Anzaldúa attributes to the problem of dualism as the root source of much of what’s wrong in human life under existing conditions. All major concepts in Anzaldúa’s thought, such as “borderlands,” “bridging,” “nepantla” and “nepantleras” (those who can travel across worlds), etc., are invented, borrowed, or revived to make possible both the understanding and the transcendence of dualistic modes of living, thinking, feeling, and sensing permeating the deepest recesses of human self and global realities. The tragedies of human violence, war, exploitation, oppression, and alienation, are, at their roots, products of the violence of dualism.

Note that Anzaldúa’s critique of dualism is not a denial of the dialectical, splitting/reintegrating, logic apparently built into all things and developmental processes in nature, society, and mind. What for her is a fundamental problem is that these binaries become habitually rigidified, dogmatized, staticized, to the point where they become unbridged and unbridgeable, creating lasting personal and broader social wounds. Healing involves a process of observation, noticing, problematization, and reengagement of the dialectical developmental dynamics of rigidified binaries.

In Anzaldúa’s view, and this is crucial to point out, what makes dualisms so difficult to heal and transform, leading to their becoming sedimented as habituated modes of thinking and behavior, inner and broader, is itself a product of *the dualistic separation of conscious and subconscious* modes of knowing and communication. It is this splitting of modes of waking and subconscious awareness, and the reification of the

split as if given in nature (and not, more accurately, as a product of the “rationalization” of modes of knowing, experiencing, and education characterizing modernity), that helps reproduce and further entrench other modes of dualistic thinking, feeling, sensing, behaving, and relating. This ensemble of the immense variety of habituated dualisms subtly permeating human inner and global life is “*the enemy within*” that must be the immediate and ultimate target of the simultaneous work on self and world Anzaldúa advocates as a liberating strategy:

The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. *La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movements away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes. (Anzaldúa, 1987:79)

The work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our

thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war. (Anzaldúa, 1987:80)

The massive, complex and subtle, work of self and global transformation to end rape, violence, and war, is nonetheless beautifully conceptualized in Anzaldúa in terms of a massive project of uprooting habituated dualisms and planting healing seeds of integrative and holistic human experience. To recognize and change the manifestations of these in oneself, is at the same time an exercise in radical understanding and changing of the world. In Anzaldúa, one finds a sense that “size” does not matter. A radical transformation of an inner habit, as minute as an attitude, feeling, or bias, are deemed to have significant repercussions for larger, global, social processes. Witnessing how Anzaldúa’s own “work” on herself has shaped and influenced a generation of intellectuals and activists across the world is an illustrative case in point.

Living in borderlands provides Anzaldúa with a pioneering role in showing how the immense work can begin and be undertaken by her global audience, through the chronicling of her own self-liberating efforts in writing and working on herself, by example. This in my view may provide the best key to understanding the nature of Anzaldúa’s writings in general and in her *Borderlands* in particular.

ANZALDÚA AND C. WRIGHT MILLS: THE CONTRASTING SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATIONS

Anzaldúa’s thesis on the simultaneity of self and global transformations has close affinities with what C. Wright Mills called the sociological imagination (1959). In both,

the central project is framed in terms of establishing and deepening a link between the personal and the global, between biography and history. In both, the simultaneity of self-reflective awarenesses of micro and macro social processes is seen as key to the proper advancement of the sociological and social project. In his classic formulation of the concept (1959), Mills distinguished on the micro level between the “inner life” and “external career” of the individual, and on the macro level between the contemporary society and its world-historical context. Although Anzaldúa’s sociological imagination takes more seriously at the micro level the inner, reflective, dimension of biographical inquiry into one’s personal troubles, on one hand, and on the other, at the macro level, the broader world-historical dimension of human predicament to frame public issues—at times cast in the language of mythologies and spiritual symbolisms—Mills and Anzaldúa do not seem to part drastically with regards to recognizing the need to transcend the dualism of personal and global spacetimes. What sets Anzaldúa apart, however, are the further extensions of her praxes of simultaneity of self and global transformation in fronts other than that between personal troubles and public issues as explicitly problematized by Mills.

In what follows, I will briefly expand upon what may be characterized as the distinguishing features of Anzaldúan sociological imagination in contrast to that of Mills.

Disciplinary Borderlands: Problematizing the “Sociological” Itself

In Anzaldúa, the very “sociological imagination” itself, or the inherited or assumed “sociological” framework informing the sociological imagination, does not escape borderlands analysis and transcen-

dence. In other words, Anzaldúa's sociological imagination is one that subjects the very premises of and about "sociology" to self-critical auto/biographical-historical scrutiny and imaginative transformation. In Mills, the project is more or less framed within disciplinary boundaries, i.e., in terms of what is presumed to be the "sociological" approach on one hand, and of how the latter is situated within the context of social science discourse on the other hand. In Anzaldúa, the dualism of the two (or three) academic cultures is itself broken down and transcended. Humanities and social scientific inquiry are seen as equally valid and necessary exercises in understanding the self and the world.

An important by-product of this disciplinary borderlands-crossing by Anzaldúa is the empowerment of the individual vis-à-vis the world. In Mills, to be sociological involves the task of explaining the individual behavior by its social "context," of diverse forms of "human nature" by the social structures which "gives rise" to them, of knowledge by its "social origins." This, what I call Newtonian, i.e., predetermined, predictable, whole-determines-part, sociological imagination is quite readily problematized in the Anzaldúan formulation and practice. Although, as quoted above, Anzaldúa acknowledges that "awareness of our [social/historical] situation" must come before inner changes, she is aware that the "awareness of our [world-historical] situation" is itself, simultaneously, an inner experience, while also immediately noting that inner changes must precede changes in the world. This is why she begins by stating that "[t]he struggle is always inner" and follows this up by again stressing that "[t]he struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains" (1987:87). In Anzaldúa one finds a Pragmatist conception in which the self and society are seen as being twin-born, and simultaneous.

The individual is empowered to en-

gage the "spirit of the world," and by changing oneself, change the world. The creative, chaotic, unpredictable, "playing" of the self with itself is world-creating and dualistic-structure-shattering. Micro *can* determine the macro, self *can* shape society, the individual *can* liberate oneself from the shackles of "social origins," "social determinism," and diverse forms of dualistic thinking, feeling, and being. It may be the case that, unconsciously, the self has been shaped by the social structures; however, once consciousness of this state is achieved and ways of transcending it willfully learned and practiced, the self has the power not only to withstand those forces and global pressures, but give birth to new selves that are the harbinger of new social orders and outcomes. Anzaldúa's writing, itself, is a demonstration of how she withstands one or another conventions of disciplines, and of writing and expression, to transcend artificial constructions of science, the arts, religion, mythology, philosophy, etc., in order to construct an alternative "sociological imagination" that is imaginative, flexible, creative, and thereby liberatory:

...I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only produces both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings. (1987:81)

Borderlands of Theorizing and Praxis

Anzaldúa sees the very process of theory-building via writing itself as a liberato-

ry praxis. Liberatory theorizing and praxis, in other words, are simultaneous efforts, and not dichotomized in spacetime. The liberating vision or practice is not one to be conceived of and undertaken as a "result" of sociological imaginative analysis, but the process of the inquiry itself is deemed to be the very terrain of liberatory and transformative struggle. One does not write to then overthrow a State later; the very act of writing is State-shattering, and transformative of minute and subtle forms of "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1989, 1991), and carceral living (Foucault 1977; also see Tamdgidi, forthcoming b). Writing is not just a call for developing and implementing a future liberatory vision; it is itself both, and simultaneously, a process of knowing and transforming the self and world-history in the here-and-now. Anzaldúa's sociological imagination is at the same time imaginatively applied sociological¹ practice:

The writing is my whole life, it is my obsession. This vampire which is my talent does not suffer other suitors. Daily I court it, offer my neck to its teeth. This is the sacrifice that the act of creation requires, a blood sacrifice. For only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the human soul be transformed. And for images, words, stories to have this transformative power, they must arise from the human body—flesh and bone—and from the Earth's body—stone, sky, liquid, soil. This work, these images, piercing tongue or ear lobes with cactus needle, are my offerings, are my Aztec blood sac-

¹ I regard the promise and mission of sociology to be its integrative, holistic character in transcending all disciplinary boundaries. In that regard, I think Anzaldúa fulfills, much more than many sociologies and sociologists, the promise of such an inherently counter-disciplinary sociology.

rifices. (1987:75)

Borderlands, in an important sense, is both a chronicle of "workings" of Anzaldúa on her own inner self, and her work for global transformation. Self liberation is at the same time an exercise in global transformation, and her writing serves doing both. This is Anzaldúa's magic and "alchemy" at work. Anzaldúa reports that books, including *Borderlands*, not only "saved [her] sanity" but also involve efforts in activating, awakening, and making concrete and familiar, the alien elements of "shifting and multiple identity and integrity" residing in borderlands in order to refashion them consciously toward ends which involve "an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being 'worked' on." *Borderlands*, then, Anzaldúa writes, "speaks of my existence. My preoccupations with the inner life of the Self, and with the struggle of that Self amidst adversity and violation" (1987: Preface).

Borderlands of Anti- and Other-systemicity

Anzaldúa's writing is not just a landscape for antisystemic theorizing and practice, but also a terrain to create new and alternative cultural and social systems and realities. She does not take as given the dualism of anti- versus othersystemic² movements. That is, she crosses back and forth the borderlands of what should not and should be, not rigidifying the negativity that may be frozen in a perpetual anti-status quo mode of activism. For her, the questioning of what is is constantly juxtaposed not just to its not being so, but to how it can or should be otherwise—especially to how it *alternatively is*, as *exemplified* by how An-

² For my first use of this term see Tamdgidi, 2001. This is further explored in my forthcoming book *Advancing Utopistics: The Three Component Parts and Errors of Marxism* (2007).

zaldúa *lives* her vision of alternative world through her writing. Anzaldúa's sociological imagination, in other words, is not just critical of what is, but also imaginatively envisages reimagined and alternatively lived states of being in self and in the world.

But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence. The counterstance refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs, and, for this, it is proudly defiant. All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Because the counterstance stems from a problem with authority—outer as well as inner—it's a step toward liberation from cultural domination. But it is not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react. (1987:78-79).

Deconstruct, construct. (1987:82)

I write the myths in me, the myths I am, the myths I want to become.

The word, the image and the feeling have a palatable energy, a kind of power. (1987:71)

Anzaldúa's vision, therefore, is not just antisystemic, but more so othersystemic and utopistic (Wallerstein 1998), for it seeks not just to overthrow, but to build alternative visions and realities. But Anzaldúa's vision is utopistic in a cross-cultural way, highly aware of the different ways East and West conceive of the utopian visions of what could or must be. This comparative/integrative vision is deeply built into Anzaldúa's simultaneous self/globe-changing strategy, in fact. For her, it is impossible to seek the good (broader) society, without a simultaneous effort in seeking the good "society" within. One is conditioned and simultaneous with the other. They are twin-born. There is no separation of means and ends, in either direction.

Movement Borderlands

Utopianism, mysticism, and critical science are mixed, and integral to one another, in Anzaldúa. Her cross-movement vision and strategy allow her to draw upon the rich reservoir of a multitude of cultural, spiritual, and intellectual traditions to pursue her work on self and the world. Anzaldúa is highly conscious of her inheritance from and affinities with diverse social movements. She identifies with all, for they provide distinctly different elements to her liberatory project. Especially, she makes significant effort to break down the dualisms of mystical and utopian social movements, and both in the context of the intellectual movements she seeks to build within and outside the academy. Hers is a utopystic (utop-yst-ic) liberatory agenda, transgressing the artificial (though real) borderlands of utopianism, mysticism, and scientific discourse. Anzaldúa's sociological imagination is not only intentionally cross-disciplinary, but as well cross-move-

ment. She is not just critical of disciplinary boundaries and of (class, race, gender, ...) movement boundaries; she considers those boundaries themselves as constructs that contribute to the maintenance of the status quo. In the very fabric of her writing, Anzaldúa constructs and integrates multiple disciplinary and practical modes of knowing and moving. She is quite wary of being fragmented into this or that movement:

I am a wind-swayed bridge, a crossroads inhabited by whirlwinds. Gloria, the facilitator, Gloria the mediator, straddling the walls between abysses. "Your allegiance is to La Raza, the Chicano movement," say my Black and Asian friends. "Your allegiance is to your gender, to women," say the feminists. Then there's my allegiance to the Gay movement, to the socialist revolution, to the New Age, to magic and the occult. And there's my affinity to literature, to the world of the artist. What am I? A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label. (Anzaldúa, in Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981:205)

Linguistic and Cultural Borderlands

Then there is the crossing of the borderlands of language—English, Castilian Spanish and North Mexican, verbal and symbolic, in prose and poetry, etc. All the modes of communication which have ever permeated her inner life are awakened and consciously activated in *Borderlands* so as to both illuminate as well as intentionally reintegrate habituated communicative boundaries and borders. That, for some readers, parts of her language in writing may not be comprehensible due to linguistic and symbolic barriers is not at issue, for

the book must be seen as first and foremost an intrapersonal dialogue among Anzaldúa's own "shifting and multiple" identities. The book is, first and foremost, a work in self-understanding and self-transformation, a writing for self which, if done effectively turns out to be, for Anzaldúa, also globe-transforming.

Anzaldúa's sociological imagination is consciously cross-cultural, and open to multiple modes of knowing. Her mestiza consciousness is highly critical of monolithic and monological modes of knowing the self and the world. In contrast to a sociological tradition or imagination suspecting non-Western cultural traditions and symbolic systems, Anzaldúa intentionally seeks to resurrect and embrace the traditional in her writing so that she could demonstrate the value of her nepantilism as the ability to travel across seemingly separate(d) worlds of meanings and cultural symbols:

In a constant state of mental nepantilism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, *la mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the *mestiza* faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a dark-skinned mother listen to? (1987: 78)

The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the am-

bivalence into something else.
(1987:79)

Stylistic Borderlands: The Significance of Conscious and Subconscious Modes of knowing and Transforming

The use of multilingual modes of communication in Anzaldúa's writing is, of course, evident. However, of equal, if not more, significance, is how Anzaldúa consciously uses symbolic language to communicate with the subconscious mind beyond the waking consciousness of everyday knowledge. Images and symbolic language are borrowed not simply for the sake of allegiance to her cultural heritage and identity, but especially to enable the crossing of conscious and unconscious awareness primarily in her own inner life but also in the inner lives of her readers. Anzaldúa is highly aware and skillful in using various linguistic modes in order to communicate across her rational, emotional, and sensual selves and those of her audience who have subconsciously internalized and perpetuate dualistic modes of living in self and in the world:

An image is a bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge: words are the cables that hold up the bridge. Images are more direct, more immediate than words, and closer to the unconscious. Picture language precedes thinking in words: the metaphorical mind precedes analytical consciousness. (1987: 69)

The foregoing provide glimpses into how Anzaldúa's sociological imagination goes beyond the narrow transcending of the dualism of personal troubles and public issues as found in Mills, but consciously problematizes the dualistic modes of imagining and engaging the disciplinary, theo-

ry/practice, anti/othersystemic, cross-cultural, cross-movement, cross-linguistic, and cross-stylistic sub/conscious borderlands as well.

**ANZALDÚA AND GURDJIEFF:
AMPLIFYING THE MULTIPLICITY OF
SELVES IN ANZALDÚA'S QUANTAL
SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION**

Among the purposes of all leaders, messiahs, messengers from the gods, and so forth, there was one fundamental and very important purpose: to find some means by which the two sides of man, and, therefore, the two sides of the earth, could live together in peace and harmony.... He added, grimly, that he was in no sense joking when he said that time was short. Further, he said that history had already proven to us that such tools as politics, religion, and any other organized movements which treated man "in the mass" and not as individual beings, were failures. That they would always be failures and that the separate, distinct growth of each individual in the world was the only possible solution.... (Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff*, 1964: 160-161)

The evolution of man is the evolution of his consciousness, and 'consciousness' cannot evolve unconsciously. The evolution of man is the evolution of his will, and 'will' cannot evolve involuntarily. The evolution of man is the evolution of his power of doing, and 'doing' cannot be the result of things which 'happen.' (G. I. Gurdjieff, quoted in *In Search of the Miraculous* (Ouspensky, 1949))

Anzaldúa's notion of the simultaneity of self and global transformation has also close affinities with the ideas of the Middle Eastern philosopher and mystic, G. I. Gurdjieff (1872?-1949). A Greek-Armenian born in Kars (at the borders of Tsarist Russia and Ottoman Turkey) and raised in the borderlands of diverse ethnic, cultural and religious traditions, Gurdjieff's life, work, and writings display quite similar considerations for bridging diverse modes of knowing and being in the world. Although he was raised in a patriarchal culture that to an extent influenced his spiritual world-view and practice, Gurdjieff's teaching nevertheless provides useful conceptual insights and formulations that can further justify and enrich Anzaldúa's liberatory strategy of global transformation via self-knowledge and change. Reminiscing about his old teacher as a boy living in Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Priere, France, a young Fritz Peters notes (as quoted above) how central to Gurdjieff was the conviction that the only hope for humanity as a whole lies in the distinct and unique (self-)development of each individual. Gurdjieff's thought found reception among a generation of contemporary artists, among them women including those gathered in *The Rope*, a group of Lesbian artists and female spiritual workers who drew inspiration from his teaching (Patterson 1998).

Gurdjieff characterized the ordinary human "individual" as a multiplicity, fundamentally structured by her or his more or less separately functioning (unless consciously/intentionally cultivated and integrated) "three-brained" physical, intellectual, and emotional centers. For him, the ordinary individual conditioned by life is actually a legion of I's acting independently from one another. Conditions of ordinary life prevent the automatic formation of an actual "individual," characterized by the presence of a master self, and ultimately a "soul," in the human being, making the attainment of these only a result of conscious

and intentional acts on the part of the person her/himself. The journey of self-understanding and change must therefore begin with the conscious labor of self-knowledge. Through self-observation (of one's current behavior), self-remembering (of one's life in long-span), and external considering of one's interactions with others in or outside "work," the actual reality and the complex dynamics of one's inner multiplicity, fragmentation, disharmony, sleep, mechanicalness, and slavery is increasingly revealed to oneself and brought under one's immediate attention. The "terror of the situation" of such inner slavery thus realized as a shock to the organism, is a necessary prerequisite for efforts toward self and broader liberation. For one to escape prison, he noted, one must first realize one is in prison.

Depending on whether the physical, emotional, or intellectual dimensions 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 distinguished from one another by Gurdjieff. Suggesting that these three "ways" of self-development are prone to failure since their trainings take longer (thus often unrealizable during a single lifetime) and 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, partly inspired by the Sufi tradition. 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.

Although Gurdjieff somewhat tends to reify the causes of the "three-brainedness" of human beings, seeking its sources at times in cosmic or "natural" dimensions, he does also consider the conditions of life human beings themselves have created as

contributing to the divided and fragmented nature of human awareness, attention, and selfhood. Cardinal, in Gurdjieff's view, and similar to the view held by Anzaldúa, is the problem of habituation and susceptibility to hypnotic sleep and suggestion that is caused by the human fragmented centers and multiple selves. It is the inability as a result of miseducation/training of the three physical, intellectual, and emotional centers of human organism to communicate with one another through use respectively of their proper language, that renders the separate and disharmonious development of the centers and the "individual" a difficult task. This leads to each center being deprived of the intelligence of the other centers, thereby making the organism vulnerable to habituated behavior, as if in sleep, as a machine, or prison.

What makes the liberatory task most difficult, though, is the individual's not even realizing that he or she is sleep. The ego, and the false pride and vanity, prove to be the most inhibiting of all factors preventing the individual from self-knowledge and self-transformation. This explains the paradigmatic significance in Gurdjieff's teaching of the seeking of self-knowledge and change. Without such a conscious and intentional effort, one has little chance of moving beyond the habits of the body, the mind, and the emotions, which altogether prevent the organism from achieving integration and harmonious development and evolution. For Gurdjieff, as reported by P.D. Ouspensky (1949, see quotation above), human evolution is the evolution of her/his consciousness, will, and the ability to do—and consciousness, will, and the ability to do cannot evolve unconsciously, involuntarily, and as a result of events which simply happen.³

Anzaldúa and Gurdjieff both seek a

³ For an extensive critical exploration Gurdjieff's life and writings, see my manuscript currently under review, "George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff: A Hermeneutic Study (an earlier version available in Tamdgidi 2003).

way out of the habituated ways of being, thinking, and feeling, and they similarly experiment with and employ multiple languages and ways of communicating in order to reach the diversely fragmented selves in order to awaken them in favor of integrative personal and broader human development. Gurdjieff also significantly experiments with at times quite odd modes of writing, of inventing new terms, concepts, etc., simply to draw the reader out of her or his habituated ways of thinking about, feeling, and sensing things. Gurdjieff's pedagogy, however, is only partly done through writing, and given his emphasis on the "three-brained" nature of human organism, he employs not only mental exercises, but also physical exercises and movements, and emotionally-evocative dances in order to engage all dimensions of the organism in favor of its all-rounded awakening and development. Gurdjieff, among others, was a highly skilled teacher of esoteric dancing, and also composed, via one of his musically accomplished pupils (Thomas de Hartmann), various musical pieces to engage the emotional center as part of his pedagogy.

In Gurdjieff, the fragmented reality of human organism and multiple selfhood is much more consciously problematized and brought to the center of the liberatory efforts than appears to be in Anzaldúa's writing. This is not to say that Anzaldúa is not aware of the problem of multiple selfhood and the challenge one's inner fragmentation poses to her liberatory strategy. For this reason, it is important to explore further the diverse ways in which Anzaldúa approaches the problem of self in her writing.

Approaches to the Self in Anzaldúa's Writing

Significant in Anzaldúa's sociological imagination is her openness to conceive of the self in its multiplicity as well as hybridity. For her, our "psyches resemble the bor-

dertowns and are populated by the same people" (1987:87); as much as one lives among populations without, one's inner life is characterized by populations of selves within that pose similar challenges to integration as those found in society at large. In terms of sexuality, Anzaldúa of course problematizes the conventional notions in mainstream society that take the singularity of human individual for granted and end up with a denial of the possibility of borderland, multiple, and hybrid identities and modes of being—which allow for the possibility that one can be one and another at the same time, simultaneously. For Anzaldúa, this is not simply posed in terms of being queer, of being both male and female, being two in one body; this is of course a source of Anzaldúa's personal enlightenment. But she takes this, her personal experience, as an expression of a more general and broader challenge facing activists who often employ dualistic modes of thinking that lead to the boxing of "bodies" in pre-fabricated, easily distinguishable and classifiable, races, genders, classes, and similar groupings.

At times, Anzaldúa uses the language of singular self when referring to herself. It is true that she refers, as found in the following passage, to the "parts" of self, but a singular frame of reference to the self may be implied in her language. In this conception, a part of the self is perceived to be relating to another part of the self:

There are many defense strategies that the self uses to escape the agony of inadequacy and I have used all of them. I have split from and disowned those parts of myself that others rejected. I have used rage to drive others away and to insulate myself against exposure. I have reciprocated with contempt for those who have roused shame in me. I have internalized rage and contempt, one part of the self (the

accusatory, persecutory, judgmental) using defense strategies against another part of the self (the object of contempt). (1987:45)

At other times, Anzaldúa casts the self in part/whole language. For instance, below, she clearly distinguishes between a "small I" that seeks to become the total Self:

She becomes a *nauhual*, able to transform herself into a tree, a coyote, into another person. She learns to transform the small "I" into the total Self. (1987:82-83)

Anzaldúa also is aware of the transient and ever-changing nature of the self, its highly fluid and transforming nature in the midst of inner and global struggle:

Every increment of consciousness, every step forward is a *travesía*, a crossing. I am again an alien in new territory. And again, and again. But if I escape conscious awareness, escape "knowing," I won't be moving. Knowledge makes me more aware, it makes me more conscious. "Knowing" is painful because after "it" happens I can't stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before. (1987:48)

Elsewhere, Anzaldúa distinguishes between the divine inner self, and another self that seeks to rule, to become willful, but often crashes into and is overpowered by the divine self that is more powerful. This is perhaps another expression of the part/whole conception of self as found in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*:

I spent the first half of my life learning to rule myself, to grow a will, and now at midlife I find that autonomy is a boulder on my path

that I keep crashing into. I can't seem to stay out of my own way. I've always been aware that there is a greater power than the conscious I. That power is my inner self, the entity that is the sum total of all my reincarnations, the godwoman in me I call *Antigua, mi Diosa*, the divine within, *Coatlicue - Cihuacoatl-Tlazolteotl - Tonantzin - Coatloapeu-Guadalupe*—They are one. When to bow down to Her and when to allow limited conscious mind to take over—that is the problem. (1987: 50)

At the same time, Anzaldúa also portrays the self as a multi-selved terrain, where various selves compete and struggle with one another over the body, feeling, and the mind. The language here is not just singular (“mine”) but also plural (“our”), and the struggle is clearly posed in terms of the struggle of inner selves:

I see *oposición e insurrección*. I see the crack growing on the rock. I see the fine frenzy building. I see the heat of anger or rebellion or hope split open that rock, releasing *la Coatlicue*. And someone in me takes matters into our own hands, and eventually, takes dominion over serpents—over my own body, my sexual activity, my soul, my mind, my weaknesses and strengths. Mine. Ours. Not the heterosexual white man's or the colored man's or the state's or the culture's or the religion's or the parents'—just ours, mine. (1987: 51)

In her most clear recognition of the multiplicity of selves, in the Preface to the new edition of *Borderlands* (1999), she distinguishes between various I's populating the person:

Theory produces effects that change people and the way they perceive the world. Thus we need *teorías* that will enable us to interpret what happens in the world, that will explain how and why we relate to certain people in specific ways, that will reflect what goes on between inner, outer and peripheral “I”s within a person and between the personal “I”s and the collective “we” of our ethnic communities. (Anzaldúa, “Preface,” 1999: xxv)

At other times, Anzaldúa makes the multi-selved nature of her inner life irrefutably plain and clear. It is characterized by “clash of voices” where mestiza's psychic restlessness generates dual and multiple personalities:

The ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The mestiza's dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness. (1987:78)

Anzaldúa attributes acute significance to how such multiple personalities and clashing voices are or may be related to, or heightened by, *la mestiza*'s dual or multi-cultured landscapes as found in broader society. This awareness of how the broader history and culture has shaped her inner fragmentation, borderland identities, and struggles, is itself an inner awakening:

Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture commu-

nicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque*, a cultural collision. (1987:78)

Note how, in a previously quoted passage, the multiplicity of selves is inextricably bound to the self and global liberatory project:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (Anzaldúa, 1987:87)

Bridging Anzaldúa and Gurdjieff

... Nuestra alma el trabajo, *the opus*, *the great alchemical work*; *spiritual* mestizaje, a “*morphogenesis*”...

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 1987: 81

As trivial as it may seem to acknowledge how Gurdjieff and Anzaldúa both have more or less refined or theoretically centered view of human inner fragmentation and multiple selfhood, I think such a conception of human inner life provides the key to understanding why a liberatory strategy based on the notion of the simultaneity of self and global transformation

makes good sense and may prove more effective than other paths hitherto traversed.

The notion of the simultaneity of self and global transformation and liberation presupposes the simultaneity of self and global oppression, domination, and exploitation. In Anzaldúa and Gurdjieff's mystical, alchemical, and hermetic language (“as above, so below”) oppression, domination, and exploitation are not only interpersonal, but as well intrapersonal processes, simultaneously. In such an alchemical work, the serpent must bite its own tale. Critical self-reflexivity, thereby, is or must be a crucial ingredient of critiques and debunking of the Other and the world, for the problem is not just out there and then, but as well in the *now* and *here*, in one's own internalized modes of oppressing, dominating, and exploiting one's own selves and one's energies, directly, or indirectly as reflections of oppression of others (Tamdgidi, 2004).

Gurdjieff's and Anzaldúa's conceptions of the ordinary inner human life as a legion of I's, characterized by multiplicities of selves, pose a significant challenge to our taken for granted notions of what is habitually defined as society, and sociology. Conventional notions of society and sociology take for granted the singularity of the individual self, or rather the individual her- or himself, and the social relatedness and interaction is presumed to be taking place across easily identifiable bodies possessing more or less singular individualities or personalities. Once we problematize this assumption and seriously take into account the fact that what we take for granted as an individual is actually a legion of I's, often quite fragmented and alienated from one another, it becomes no longer possible to readily maintain a conception of society as comprised of interacting persons, and more plausible to conceive of society in terms of interacting selves.

Importantly, the very dualism of self and society itself, which underlies the paradox encountered when considering the thesis of the simultaneity of self and global transformation,

constitutes a fundamentally habituated dualism, a borderland that needs to be transcended, crossed, and bridged. If the self is conceived as a social relation, of something relating to itself, the reified notion of “the social” as comprising a relatedness to an “Other”—as presumed in a Newtonian notion of society as a system of interacting human bodies—gives way to a notion of the social as diverse forms of self-relations and self-interactions: intrapersonal (relating to one’s own organism), interpersonal (relating across organisms), and extrapersonal (relating to the built or natural environment). The fact that in a society or culture, only my relatedness to myself is seen as a self-relation, and the label of the “social” is applied only to when I relate to an Other (singular or collective), this may indicate the presence of an alienated/ing mode of production and living in which the relatedness of members to one another are not conceived as self-interactions of different kinds. Upon further inquiry, one will then find one’s selves as much constituted by how one relates to an “Other” as one finds a multitude of alienated/ing “Others” among one’s divided and fragmented selves—who also partake in constituting her or his identities.

Once we adopt a notion of the self as a social relation, and of social relations as diverse forms of self-relations and interaction, it becomes clear why a liberatory strategy based on the notion of the simultaneity of self and global transformation makes good sense. My relatedness to others does not take place in isolation from my relating to myself. They are always twin-born, and as Anzaldúa points out the struggle is always inner, and only it appears to be acted out in broader society. Only through becoming aware of the real nature of oppression, domination, and exploitation in the midst of one’s inner multi-selved landscape, can one become truly aware of the reality of the same in broader global society. Imperiality in the global and world-historical context cannot really take place without inner conditions characterized

by divided-and-ruled colonized selves where the inner landscape is left vulnerable to cultural, political, and economic oppression and manipulation. Colonialities within and in broader society are one and the same thing, and by targeting the inner conditions characterized as such, one is simultaneously targeting the fundamental structures of imperialism and coloniality in a global and world-history context. The divided inner landscape, then, becomes both an actual terrain for the transformative act as well as a laboratory for broader social transformation.

The Newtonian conceptions of society, and practices of sociology, are premised by the presumed singularity of the individual as a “social” actor. The notion that individuals’ lives are “determined” by their “social” relations is highly reminiscent of the Newtonian Laws of physics where the bodies, being conceived as billiard balls, respond to external stimuli or forces, and do not possess “forces” of their own to engender alternative motions and directions. The habituated notions of the “social” as those relating the persons or individuals to one another, bring forth dualistic notions of self and society where the latter is supposed to be, as in the Newtonian world-view, determining the former. In what I have called quantal sociological imagination, however, such presumed conceptions of the social give way to a notion of society in terms of an ensemble of interacting sub-atomic, sub-individual, selves. That people become individuals (individuate) into beings capable of exercising conscious awareness and will power in response to broader social forces, is then treated as a *possibility* subject to conscious and intentional human (self-)education and action, and not taken for granted or otherwise dismissed.

I use “quantal” to refer to that sociological perspective which treats society as an interactive system of sub-atomic selves rather than of presumed atomic bodies/individuals. In quantal sociology, self is treated as a social relation, and social relations

as diverse forms of intra- (inner), inter- (across bodies/persons), and extrapersonal (in relation to built and natural environments) self-interactions. The recasting of the self-society borderland itself in terms of part-whole dialectics helps transcend the dualism of self and society which feeds the apparent paradox of the simultaneity of self and global transformations thesis—hence resolving the “confusion” Anzaldúa speaks of when building and applying her theory. One can not effectively bridge with others, if one is unable to bridge one’s own “three-brained” physical, emotional, and thought centers and legions of fragmented “I”s. Liberatory agencies for radical self and global transformation require consciously integrated and bridged, not fragmented and alienated, personal and collective selfhoods, for they themselves need to be the harbingers of their aspiring alternative social realities. To transform oneself from a colonized landscape of divided-and-ruled multiple selves serving imperialism into an integrated self-determining individuality in favor of a just global society, therefore, is not only a necessary step to broader global transformation, but is an exercise in global transformation in and of itself.

Borderlands, left to their dualistic landscapes serving imperialism, are breeding grounds for fragmented, alienated/ing multiple selfhoods, individually and collectively. Bridging involves conscious and intentional/willful efforts at integrating the colonized selves in favor of a just global society conceived as a world-system of self-determining individualities.

TOWARD NEW AGENDA: SEEKING SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND TRANSFORMATION AS HUMAN RIGHTS

Gloria Anzaldúa’s proposal for global transformation through ever expanding self-transformations as expressed in the ep-

igraph opening this article, resonates with the spirit of much of what the world’s genuine mystical traditions have sought across millennia. What she introduces to that tradition, however, is the bridging self-critical knowledge and change one hand, and of global transformation on the other. She seeks to bridge and transform the mystical and the utopian traditions, and does so in ways that also invited critical social scientific research and investigation.

Anzaldúa’ intellectual and spiritual work, therefore, does not seem to be bound by either Western or Eastern visions of and paths to the good life, but are highly transgressive and bridging of both modes of seeking the better life. Visions of Western utopianism seeking the good life in futuristic (and at times retrospective) geohistorical and global contexts have contrasted sharply with those of Eastern mystics who have sought the good life in the here-and-now of human inner experience despite and in the midst of worldly suffering. Western utopianism has found itself caught in vicious cycles of dualistic argumentations for private or public property; Eastern mysticism has problematized, more or less convincingly, the very possessive and habitual attitudes—private or public—toward the world of things, ideas, feelings, relations, and processes. In one the object is “a world to win;” in another, to lose habituations to it. In one, the Earth belongs to humanity; in another, humanity to the Earth. Of course both traditions have in time spread across the globe and taken new shapes in their counterpart geocultural landscapes. Yet, Western utopian and Eastern mystical traditions—diverse as they are in their pursuit of the meaning and ways of seeking the good life—have both been eschewed by and alienated from an hegemonic scientific paradigm which has itself similarly sought the ends of the good society and human progress.

These three traditions in world culture, commonly setting their goal to understand

and envision a “good life” that does not (yet) exist, but could, have sought various ways of realizing their ideals in imagination and/or through local or wider practices. The failings of these movements, marginal or hegemonic, however, are no reasons for dismissing the potential contributions each has made to understanding the human predicament and the ways of resolving it. One way to go about a better world is through rigorous critical studies of the very failings of these three currents in bringing about a just global society. In fact, as previously argued (Tamdgidi 2003), one reason for such failures may be found to be the mutual alienations and separations of these movements from one another. The three currents have failed, in other words, because their mutual alienations from one another have prevented them from integrating their distinctive foci of liberatory theorizing and practice across the matter-mind, self-society, and theory-practice dualisms fragmenting an otherwise singular human experience and liberatory project.

“Utopistics,” a further metamorphosis in my mind of Wallerstein’s invented concept,⁴ is a three-fold compound term (utopyst-ics) invented—emulating in the classical tradition of how the Morean term “utopia” itself came to be—to infuse a comparative and integrative, East-West, cross-cultural dialogue into the simultaneous exercise in utopian, mystical, and scientific

⁴ “What I mean by utopistics, a substitute word I have invented, is something rather different. Utopistics is 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, in politics, and in morality. (Wallerstein, 1998:1)

paradigms. This is to be pursued intentionally by using the emerging new global historical technologies to engender new synergistic outcomes devoid of mutual historical and intellectual alienations characterizing the three traditions. I find in Anzaldúa a highly refined and creative movement toward such a cross-cultural, integrative approach towards change in self and global contexts.

Utopistics as a simultaneously comparative and integrative sociological practice in favor of a just global society, is guided by the premise that escape from the global impasse confronting humanity is impossible in the absence of serious and critical efforts at personal self-knowledge within a world-historically aware, imaginative sociological framework. The “billiard ball” and “atomic” Newtonian sociologies that have for long shaped our imaginations of ourselves and the world portray the person as a singular entity, and society as an ensembles of relations across persons and separate bodies (or groups of them) as basic units of analysis. In contrast quantal sociological imaginations seek to deconstruct those Newtonian visions and metanarratives of our social psychologies, by revealing the chaotic, multi-selved landscapes of our intra- and interpersonal relationships at the sub-“atomic” level, nourishing simultaneously sub-individual and universal sociological imaginations in which society is reconceived as global interactions of selves rather than of presumed singular individuals.

The sociology of self-knowledge as advanced in my work is a theoretically-reimagined sociological endeavor, concerned with the study of how the investigator’s own self-knowledges and world-historical social structures constitute one another. As such, it has close affinities with what C. Wright Mills coined “the sociological imagination,” but is also different from and goes beyond its classic formulation. The sociology of self-knowledge aims to extend the so-

ciological imagination in both directions of its dialectical inquiry. On one hand, distinguishing between the study of one's own and other individuals' personal troubles, the sociology of self-knowledge focuses more immediately on the self-knowledges of the investigator and her or his own personal troubles—that is, on the autobiographical aspect of the microsociological inquiry, seeking to legitimize the seeking of scientific self-knowledge and liberating autobiographical research and teaching as important sociological interests. It is one thing to study others' personal troubles, and another to study one's own. On the other hand, the sociology of self-knowledge seeks to encourage the conduct of scientific autobiographical inquiry in the context of a rigorous and ever expanding knowledge of world-history and long-term and large-scale social structures in comparative and cross-cultural frameworks. The scholar engaged in the sociology of self-knowledge is specifically interested in how her or his own intimate self-knowledges in everyday life and autobiography on one hand and long-term, large-scale world-historical social structures on the other hand constitute one another.

Another important difference between the sociology of self-knowledge and the sociological imagination is the relaxing of a Newtonian, predetermined, and somewhat dogmatized assumption built into sociology, the sociology of knowledge, and at least some interpretations of Mills's sociological imagination. Traditionally, to be "sociological" has involved an effort to explain the micro by the macro, of knowledge by its "social origins," of inner experience by the "social context," of the personal troubles by the public issues. The sociology of self-knowledge specifically seeks to deconstruct such predetermined and dualistic conceptions of the micro and macro, of individual/self and society, etc., pursuing a strategy which takes the interactive nature of the dialectics of self and society seriously

in terms of the reciprocally *creative dialectics* of part and whole.⁵ Social "context," "origins," "issues" do not exist over and above the intra- and inter-, and extrapersonal realities of social actors, especially of the investigator. Being "sociological" in the pursuit of the sociology of self-knowledge requires adopting what I have called a *creative* attitude towards the dialectics of self and society, one that is post-deterministic, i.e., subjects the determination of the nature of part-whole causalities in the self-society interaction to the dynamics of research and social praxis itself, including the investigator's own creative agency.⁶

The sociology of self-knowledge aims to advance and invent new, theoretically imaginative, conceptual and curricular structures for the pursuit of the above goal. Human architecture, also proposed and developed in my work aims to infuse a creative and spatiotemporally conscious methodological approach to the dialectics of self and society in an applied sociological framework. Building on the Social Construction of Reality tradition in sociology, Human Architecture seeks to introduce and advocate artful spatiotemporal reimaginings of ontological, epistemological, and methodological foundations of social science and in particular sociology, in order to de/reconstruct the dualistic conceptions of matter and mind, self and society, and theory and practice subconsciously fettering humanistic social analysis and praxis.

Mills's notion of the sociological imagination has been a pivotal concept in sociology. Imaginative sociology, in contrast,

⁵ For a detailed, systematic exposition of the creative dialectical method, see my *Advancing Utopistics: The Three Component Parts and Errors of Marxism* (forthcoming, 2007), methodological appendix.

⁶ For an insightful, engaging, and interesting reading of society as an art form, and of sociology as a creative, artistic endeavor, see Glenn Jacobs's *Charles Horton Cooley: Imagining Social Reality* (UMass Press, 2006).

seeks to build on Mills's significant contribution, by emphasizing the personally self-reflective, world-historically encompassing, and humanistically creative and transformative natures respectively of the private, public, and causal components of the sociological imagination. Imaginative Sociology seeks to develop new transformative methodological, theoretical, and applied sociological frameworks to enable the individual to radically understand and determine—in a comparative and integrative framework and in favor of a just global society—how her or his personal self-knowledges and world-historical social structures constitute one another. Towards this end, Human Architecture, Sociology of Self-Knowledge, and Utopistics are advanced in my work as imaginative exercises in applied sociological method, theory, and practice. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, has thereby been dedicated to the conduct, collection, and publication of teaching and research in the field in a theoretically and pedagogically liberating framework.

Anzaldúa's writings and cultural theory contain a rich and much more highly refined sociological imagination than that advanced by Mills. Her work in many ways also transcends the limits of Gurdjieff's work in terms of engaging the broader social causes of human suffering. Her life and work provide tremendous confirmation and inspiration in the pursuit of my own interests and agenda as well. What makes Anzaldúa's liberatory strategy, based on the notion of the simultaneity of self and global transformations, effective is the relentless and perpetual manner in which she tackles the multitude of ways in which our sociological imaginations themselves are fragmented across numerous habituated dualisms. I think the secret of her successful spiritual work lies in this bridging of diverse borderlands fragmenting her inner reality, which at the same time, as conveyed through her writing to the world at large,

becomes world-transformative as well. The bridging of personal troubles and public issues in her work is pursued at the very same time in the context of bridging of conscious and unconscious, rational, emotional, and sensual modes of knowing and being, of bridging of cultures, languages, and of movements, across the anti/othersystemic divides. It is the quantal and utopystic collision/fusion of all these inner, subatomic, selves in Anzaldúa that makes her writing and spiritual work so explosive, cathartic, energizing, hopeful, and invigorating—turning a slight of her pen, a subtle thought and feeling expressed in a single sentence, in poetry and prose, into a highly transformative force in and among those fortunate to be touched by her life and writings.

Anzaldúa's life and works and their reception in caring academic environments demonstrate why the creative/poetic exercise of self-knowledge/transformation in increasingly global and world-historical frameworks is a *human right*, and awareness of and training in it must be a fundamental "Gen Ed" requirement comprising any serious liberal arts education in our colleges and universities.

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