

Introduction to Volume IV, No. 1 (2015)

**Prophet of Peace:
Celebrating Ivan Illich's Diverse Pathways Beyond Our Madness**

Viewers of Attenborough's *Gandhi* will recall the moment when Life Magazine's Margaret Bourke-White (played by Candice Bergen) approaches Mira Behn (Gandhi's adopted daughter, Madeline Slade, born to a British Admiral, played by Geraldine James) with a troubling concern. Sensing Gandhi-ji's palpable sadness, his sense of the peace movement's failures¹, Bourke-White seeks an explanation. Mira Behn responds,

"I may be blinded by my love for him but I believe when we most needed it, he offered the world a way out of the madness ... but he doesn't see it, neither does the world." (*Gandhi*, 2005)

This scene, occurring in January 1948, is followed minutes later with Gandhi's assassination. Arguably, that particular madness manufactured by the Empire and by Fundamentalists of the world during Gandhi's lifetime continues into our present. So, then, what hopes may we cultivate to find pathways out of our "madness" today?

Thirty years later, in January 1978, Ivan Illich's pilgrimage takes him to Sevagram Ashram, Wardha, India, the site where Gandhi dwelled many years in his mud home. Having been granted permission to spend the night in Gandhi's home, Illich reflects on its "message."

¹ Notwithstanding the peace movement's astounding successes in ending the British empire, with his humility and wisdom, Gandhi recognized its many failures: including the division of one people into two nation-states, India and Pakistan. Both accepted the madness and violence of the many institutions of the British "Raj," merely replacing the rule of "white Sahibs" with "brown Sahibs."

“This hut of Gandhi’s demonstrates to the world how the dignity of the common [wo]/man can be brought up. It is also a symbol of the happiness that we can derive from practicing the principles of simplicity, service and truthfulness.”
(1992, p. 68)

Illich is said to have remarked that all his work is but a footnote to Gandhi. “The Message of Bapu’s Hut” provides the seeds of much of Illich’s thought over the next two decades.

For half a century after Gandhi’s assassination, Illich continued his pilgrimage on pathways opened or inspired by Gandhi as well as his many other mentors, masters and teachers. Illich offers immeasurable riches in words and actions regarding all the possibilities open to us for understanding and enacting peace in all of its vastness of radical (i.e. rooted) differences.

Peace/s Pluriverse

Invited to Japan to give the opening address upon the founding of the Asian Peace Research Association (“Conference on Asian Peace Research in the Global Context,” Yokohama, Dec. 1980), Illich confessed to his friends in the audience that he could as little make pronouncements on the meaning of peace in Japan, given his unfamiliarity with the vernacular, as he could about Japanese poetry. Illich—humbly admitting his ignorance of Japanese cultures and languages—demonstrated the wild diversity of vernacular understandings / praxes of peace. *Shanti* for the Hindus and *pax Romana* for the Romans are as unrelated to each other as *shalom* to the Jews and *kami* and *kita* of the Malay peoples, states Illich. “In short, there is no ‘identity’ in peace.” (Illich, 1992, p.17)

Peace has a different meaning for each epoch and for each culture area...

[W]ithin each culture ... peace means something different both at the center and on the margins. At the center, the emphasis is on 'peace keeping'; on the margin, people hope to be 'left in peace'.... Peace remains unreal, merely an abstraction, unless it stands for an ethno-anthropological reality. But it would remain equally unreal if we did not attend to its historical dimension. Until quite recently war could not totally destroy peace, could not penetrate all levels of peace, because the continuation of war was based on the survival of the subsistence cultures which fed it. Traditional warfare depended on the continuation of people's peace ... Peace protected the peasant and the monk ... oxen and grain on the stem. ... Subsistence became the prey of expanding markets in services and goods ... the pursuit of a utopia.... (Illich, 1992, pp. 15-23)

Noting the violence inextricably linked to our contemporary madness,² Illich reveals how the dominant culture's "peace" colonizes and obliterates the abundant peace/s of the pluriverse. Empires, corporations, nation states and their bureaucracies employ for their continuation and growth all the machinery needed to obliterate people's peace/s ... in their commons; expressions of their unique genius in all their particularity and singularity.

First, *pax economica* cloaks the assumption that people have become incapable of providing for themselves. It empowers a new elite to make all people's survival

² Documentation of our madness in the Information Age is vast, beyond comprehension. Merely reading some of it surely leaves most suffering impotence, if not madness or *apocalyptic randomness*. Otto Scharmer's *Theory U* offers us a brief enough gaze to destroy all illusions of peaceful progress; without the despair that this is too big and unsurmountable to find our way out of our collectively created insanity/madness. Yet, the practical wisdom necessary for dissolving Empire defined Gandhi's genius. See Otto Scharmer, pp. 2-3 for a short, clear path into the modern heart of darkness.

dependent on their access to education, health care, police protection, apartments and supermarkets In ways previously unknown it exalts the producer and degrades the consumer *Pax economica* labels the subsistent as ‘unproductive,’ the autonomous as ‘asocial,’ the traditional as ‘underdeveloped.’ It spells violence against all local customs which do not fit a zero sum game. [Illich, 1992, pp. 23]

Looking at our contemporary madness—the many forms of violence that reduce the pluriverse into “the one best system,” Illich refuses to engage/feed the “apocalyptic randiness”³ that leaves us daunted, paralyzed by horror and despair. With him, we see the modern tragedy. With our eyes wide open to the horror, we also discover—with Gandhi and all of Illich’s teachers—the virtues that are essential for healing ourselves from the madness. Such virtues (including courage, temperance and compassion, et al.) are necessary—without these friendship cannot regenerate the conviviality of commons and commonsense.

Conviviality, friendship ... these are the antidote to the many forms of violence—humble and particular—offering pathways beyond the contemporary madness. *Philia* (learned from the Greeks) is one of the key ingredients of conviviality by which we counter the endless competitiveness that compels the life of *homo oeconomicus* (= *homo miserabilis* or needy man who fights to hoard scarce resources, fearing or terrorized by the prospect of sharing them).

³Illich’s expressions, including this one and others, like “masturbatory dreams” (Stuchul and Prakash 2015, p. 1) are evocative, audacious and provocative – one demonstration, among many, of his creative styles that escape the confines of professional niceties and political correctness. Illich was a master at calling a spade a “spade.” This specific Illich expression, “apocalyptic randiness,” (Cayley, 1992, p. 146) is suggestive of a kind of action which, Illich implores, must be avoided ... suggestive of a disciplined practice (virtue) of abstention to which friends can commit.

Greek inspired Illichian *eudaimonia* of convivial living is impossible without *philia*/friendships guiding our lives. Lives of embracing simple living remain as possible for Illich as they were for Gandhi. Among the central lessons Illich learned and reflected on during the hours he meditated on the message of a home that would make complete sense to the poor, the homeless, and the virtuous include: practicing the arts of living with “enoughness” or “sufficiency” –countering the gluttony that Gandhi healed with very practical principles for daily actions (“renounce and enjoy;” and, “there is enough for every person’s need but not for a *single* person’s greed,” et al.).

Juxtaposing Illich and Gandhi as *prophets of peace*, we honor their sense and sensibility about finding/making/cultivating peace/s, while identifying the violence threatening these. Each one’s quest for peace took him on pilgrimages where he dwelled humbly amidst the abundant richness of friendships—governed by hospitality, simplicity, and an abundance of all the ingredients of a good life, including freedom and diversity.

It is in friendship that this Journal began and continues. We extend our invitation to reflect upon Illich’s ideas—on the pluriverse beyond the madness—for contributions in multiple languages, from multiple contexts, to explore the many pathways beyond the madness opened by the polyglot Illich and his teachers. This prophet of peace offers us walkable pathways, as diverse as are the vernacular cultures of the world. Illich’s teachers include and go beyond Gandhi: to the little “elf” he met in Puerto Rico (Leopold Kohr); to his cherished “Master Ellul”; to the post Hiroshima Japanese who invited him to reflect on moving from the madness of developing bombs, et al. to “people’s peace” (including the flourishing of all creatures great and small—animal, vegetation, and other).

In this issue of the *International Journal of Illich Studies*—the first since the journal was relocated to the Penn State Libraries Open Journal System—we have sought to bring together contributions from Ivan’s students, *conspirators*, friends as well as those whose own work draws upon Illich’s. A special section devoted to the recent publication of Todd Hartch’s *The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West* (Oxford University Press, 2015) features reviews/commentaries from five of Ivan’s friends and collaborators (David Cayley, Gustavo Esteva, Patricia Inman, Daniel Grego, and David Kast). Where readers will sense in the reviews a prevailing disappointment, even strong disagreement with Hartch’s conclusions, no doubt Hartch’s book will generate renewed interest in Illich’s thought. The remainder of this issue includes a diversity of articles—that take up Illich’s interpretation of the Good Samaritan parable, applying it to urban development and its ramifications for people and the relationships among them (Perillo’s “Ignoring and Encountering the Tragic Neighbor Through the Built Environment”); a contribution from Illich friend, Gustavo Esteva (“Time To Enclose The Enclosers With Marx and Illich”) who considers Illich’s thought juxtaposed to Marx’s—an analysis that challenges those who hold “orthodox” perspectives of both thinkers. Gustavo Esteva’s evidence includes demonstrating how grassroots movements across the globe are applying Illich’s ideas to “build the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible”; David Greenwood’s article (“Technofasting in the Age of Technotantalization”) is Part II of a conjoint presentation (with Madhu Suri Prakash) given at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (A.E.R.A.) at Philadelphia in 2014. In that shared presentation session, they reflect upon the importance of fasting for Illich (as it was for Gandhi and most traditional peoples) for

healing our consumptive, addictive gluttony. A final contribution, from Illich's friend, Marianne Gronemeyer ("On The Alert!: Crisis As a Permanent State—How We Get Used To A No-Thing") discusses the effects of crisis generation by State, corporate, bureaucratic et al. other "powers" on how people perceive possibilities for constructing alternatives—be they alternative post-industrial paradigms or institutions. In the final sections, Illich "admirers," Maylan Dunn-Kenney and R. Alan Wight provide contributions to round out the issue. Dunn-Kenney's review of Leonard Waks' book, *Education 2.0: The LearningWeb Revolution and the Transformation of the School*, considers the surprising technological (and educational) optimism of this former Illich colleague. The final entry, a poem by R. Alan Wight (whose own work within Community Supported Agriculture (C.S.A.s) demonstrates its transformational possibilities) and titled, "Illichian Inclination," highlights the connections between ecological destruction and schooling—a connection overlooked by most.

Taking his inspiration from Gandhi's Hindu *shanti*, Illich extends our imagination to understanding differences in the peace/s of the pluriverse. In revealing to us the possibilities of creating a world "in which many worlds can flourish," he takes us to the land of the Zapatistas, celebrating several among millions of peace/s.

Translating the Nahuatl poem, Illich offers us another gift of peace that calls for honoring "the otherness of the other." It gives us the flavors – *sapia, sapiencia* of the peace and conviviality he explored; wholly and inextricably intertwined to escape our madness of ferocious, uncontrolled competitive violence.

Illich speaks,

“Before I translate it for you, I must say this comes from a language, Nahuatl, an Aztec language in which one-third of all roots, of all words, refer to flowers. And it is directed at a god who is the god in whom all have [?] consciousness -- that’s what his name means. But it also means in whose juice all of us grow. You can translate it the way you want. It is directed at him and it says:

**Oh, only for so short awhile
You have loaned us to each other
Because we take form in your act of drawing us,
And we take life in your painting us,
And we breath in your singing us.
But only for a short while
You have loaned us to each other
Because even a drawing cut into crystalline obsidian fades
And even the green feathers ["the crown feathers," as Illich explains] of the
quetzal bird lose their color
And even the songs of the waterfall die out in the dry season
So we, too,
Because only for a short while you have loaned us to each other⁴.**

Thank you for reading, for continuing to nourish the contagion of the conversations initiated in this issue widely among your “circles,” for continuing to seriously respond to Illich’s gutsy challenges posed before Presidents, Popes, and Empires. We look forward to meeting you some day soon —out beyond the madness; in places—neither romantic nor utopic—where differences can be explored without the shunning suffered by the outcastes, the lower castes, the marginals silenced by the centers of power and privilege; places where peace/s can continue to be regenerated; take root and grow. At the grassroots, such places multiply with joyful contagion; with millions of commons/communities generating, sustaining and sharing *abundancia*: healing us from the

⁴ Accessed on Aug. 31, 2015 at <http://backpalm.blogspot.com/2012/06/have-loaned-us-to-each-other.html>. Gratitude to the late John Verity for his loving and dedicated efforts to share Illich’s (and friends’) thoughts and ideals widely via his blog, “Newscarecity.”

economics of engineered scarcity; keeping madness at bay; multiplying friendships
constituting peoples' peace/s.

Sincerely,

Dana L. Stuchul and Madhu Suri Prakash, Co-editors
September, 2015

References

- Black, C. (Director). (2010). *Schooling the world: The white man's last burden*. Teluride, Co.: Lost People Films.
- Brown, J. (1998). *Dialogues*. Berkeley, Ca.: Berkeley Hills Books.
- Cayley, D. (1992). *Ivan Illich in conversation*. Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press.
- Cayley, D. (2005). *Rivers north of the future: The testament of Ivan Illich*. Toronto, ON.: House of Anansi Press.
- Dietrich, W. et al. (Eds.). (2011). *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*. Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 352-372.
- Esteva, G. (2011). *Guelaguetza/**and/Tu chh'ia/:Chh'ia/*: A Zapotec perspective of what others call friendship. In W. Dietrich et al. (Eds.). *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*. Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 352-372.
- Gandhi. Dir. Richard Attenborough. Perf. Ben Kingsley, Candice Bergen, Roshan Seth et al. 25th anniversary edition. Sony Pictures. 2005. DVD.
- Hartch, T. (2015). *The prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the crisis of the west*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.
- Illich, I. (1971). *Deschooling society*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row.
- (1973). *Tools for conviviality*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row.
- (1977). *In lieu of education*. In *Toward a history of needs*. New York, N.Y.: Pantheon Books.
- (1983). *Gender*. London: Marion Boyars.
- (1988). *The educational enterprise in the light of the Gospel*. Unpublished manuscript. Accessed June 24, 2014 at http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1988_Educational.html
- (1990). "To hell with good intentions." In Jane Kendall, et. al. *Combining Service and Learning: A resource book for community and public service*. Vol. I. Raleigh, NC: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education. Pp. 314-320.
- (1992). "The message of Babu's hut." In *In the mirror of the past: Lectures and addresses, 1978-1990*. New York: Marion Boyars. Pp. 65-69.

- (1992). The de-linking of peace and development. In *In the mirror of the past: Lectures and addresses, 1978-1990*. New York: Marion Boyers. Pp. 15-26.
- (1993). "To honor Jacques Ellul." An address given at Bordeaux, France on November 13, 1993. Accessed on Aug. 31, 2015 at http://www.davidtinapple.com/illich/1993_honor_ellul.PDF
- (1994). "The wisdom of Leopold Kohr." Fourteenth Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures. October 1994, Yale University. Accessed on Aug. 31, 2015 at <http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/publications/lectures/illich/ivan/the-wisdom-of-leopold-kohr>.
- Ivan I., Zola, I., McKnight, J., Caplan, J., Shaiken, H. (1977). *Disabling professions*. London: Marion Boyers.
- Illich recordings. Penn State University Library Archives. <https://psu.box.com/s/cxp35h8pkdmbtjlo8imu> Link accessed on June 23, 2014.
- McKnight, J. (1995). *The careless society: Community and its counterfeits*. New York, N.Y.: Basic Books.
- McKnight, J. and Block, P. (2010). *The abundant community: Awakening the power of Families and neighborhoods*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Prakash, M.S., Greenwood, D. (2014). *Technofasting in the age of technotantalization*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. April, 2015. Philadelphia.
- Sachs, W. (Ed.) (1991). *The development dictionary: A guide to knowledge as power*. London: Zed.
- Scharmer, C. Otto. (2009). *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges*. San Francisco: BK Pub. Inc.
- Stuchul, D.L., Prakash, M.S. (2015). *Masturbatory dreams of education for ameliorating "x": Power and privilege to professional educators increased*. *Sosyoloji Dergisi*, 3. Dizi, 30. Sayı, 2015/1. Forthcoming.