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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

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Ignoring and Encountering the Tragic Neighbor Through the Built Environment

Jesse Perillo

Ivan Illich was perpetually aware of how people pursue certain endeavors, employ new technologies, and chase progress while being blind to how those endeavors, technologies, and progress are defining more than their intended object. Likewise, Illich showed a great concern for public space and who used it, occupied it, and, inevitably, defined it. With those concerns in mind, the city still proves to be an important subject for Illich's type of analysis which calls to attention the dramatic shifts of understanding and relationship that occur alongside the drive of progress and development. And, indeed, his reading of the Good Samaritan story still should serve as a part of our moral imaginations as we build our cities and shape ourselves.

The construction of our cities will shape who we see and where our sympathies and compassion will be directed, and so we must be diligent about considering where this attention is allowed to be directed and whether it is directed away from the tragic lives. When we allow the built environment to actively hide persons from our presence, we remove the physical reality of the body which affects the moral formation of responsibility. Contrary to the act of hiding, the story of the Good Samaritan recognizes that the tragic may not be overcome but that the tragedy still should be kept public.

Major cities, in the attempt to revitalize their downtowns, have rebuilt public space in order to make it uncomfortable for the "less desirable" elements to occupy that space. Using San Francisco's redesign of its downtown as a case study, I will show how

the development of space can also serve to define who is a neighbor and the qualities of that neighbor. Design determines who and what will be made public. And, in this way, the construction of the built environment is not just about justice or injustice, but it is also about the greater moral formation of the community because publicity and proximity can affect one's desire and ability to tend to tragic circumstances. Employing Ivan Illich's reading of the story of the Good Samaritan, I will contend that there exists a challenging but realistic and critical imperative to keep tragic lives public through the construction of the built environment.

The Link Between Building and Neighbor

At the beginning of his lecture "Building Dwelling Thinking," Martin Heidegger describes the etymological roots and connections between building, neighbor, and being in order to expose the deeper meaning of what it means to build. Heidegger explains how the "Old English and High German word for building, *buan*, means to dwell," and that this original relationship between building and dwelling has been lost except in "the German word *Nachbar*, neighbor," which etymologically means near-dweller.¹ And this etymological relation makes perfect sense as it is hard to define a person's relationships until they are willing to make a claim on a certain space, whether it be a physical space or not. From this relationship between neighbor and dwelling, Heidegger proceeds to explain through describing the relationship between *bin* (to be) and *bauen* (to build/to dwell) that the way a person dwells is a part of who they are. He does this in order to

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings* (NY: Harper Collins, 1993), 349. Kristin Dillman-Jones calls attention to the significance of these definitions in relation to Illich's thought in "Mikvah, Rain, and the Waters of Dwelling," *The International Journal of Illich Studies* 3, no. 1 (February, 2013): 1-3.

explain what is too frequently lost when people typically describe building.² Often building is considered to be just about the physical construction of a building, but it needs to be understood as the acknowledgement of what people choose to be at peace with and what people choose to welcome and gather around themselves.

Another way of understanding this deeper relationship between building, dwelling, and being can be found considering the relationship between the words “house” and “home.” Often these words can be used interchangeably when describing the location where one lives; however, “home” can also be used to describe a meaningful relationship that a person has while “house” remains purely for describing a physical construction. One can say to a loved one that “you are my home,” but telling someone that “you are my house” will sound quite strange. Construction of the built environment will obviously create houses, but it has to be understood that it forms/deforms homes as well. In part, it influences where and with whom people will feel safe. The built environment affects who will gather and who will be welcomed.

It is our task not just to delineate boundaries of where we feel safe and at home in the built environment; instead, we should be compelled to discern whether the boundaries or the uses of some space prove damaging to a person’s ability to dwell, feel at home, or welcome another. Clear property rights within the built environment are not the sole measure of being a good neighbor. In the poem “Mending Wall,” Robert Frost addresses both the physical and moral boundaries we set up within our lives; he makes it obvious that a clear boundary and clear rules for an area do not always aim at the good. Frost tells of an annual encounter with a neighbor where they mend the wall that separates their

² Heidegger, 350.

respective orchards. Frost questions why they continually mend this wall between their properties when neither person possesses anything that must be retained by said wall. Frost's neighbor responds with the maxim, "Good fences make good neighbors." However, in the poem Frost declares that this maxim cannot be applied universally. Indeed, Frost is wary of this claim. He writes that "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know/What I was walling in or walling out,/ And to whom I was like to give offence." The built environment is not neutral. When a wall, or any structure, is built, it changes the abilities people have to interact with that space due to physical limitations and the property rights associated with construction.³ Beyond the limiting of physical freedoms, the desire for a specific built environment alters relationships and how persons are viewed. Frost suggests an understanding of this when he declares that "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." The rest of this paper will address the power of walls and the built environment to affect more than just physical freedom.

Who Might This Neighbor Be?

In an effort to redevelop downtowns, cities define what populations they would like to see enter that space. As cities choose which populations they would like to see in an area, those directing redevelopment logically must make certain assumptions about various populations in the city. But at what cost? Those advocating for the homeless explain how the general population often has certain stereotypes of what it means to be

³ The built environment may not be the final cause of one's freedom, but it is certainly substantive. As Jeremy Waldron States, "No one is free to perform an action unless there is somewhere he is free to perform it. Since we are embodied beings, we always have a location. Moreover, though everyone has to be somewhere, a person cannot always choose any location he likes." Jeremy Waldron, "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom," *UCLA Law Review* 39 (1991): 296.

homeless, and these stereotypes often lead to a dismissive attitude towards the homeless. These stereotypes simplify the complex lives of those that occupy spaces which are to be redeveloped and thereby provide an inadequate understanding of who these neighbors are.⁴ Thirty percent of the homeless fit the stereotype of being on the street due to substance abuse, but 22% of the homeless are employed, 23% are military veterans, and in some parts of the United States 40% of the homeless are homeless as families. During the major push for redevelopment in San Francisco, minors accounted for 20- 30% of the homeless population, 25% were physically disabled, and a large portion of the population was suffering from AIDS.⁵ As of last year, homelessness was on the rise in San Francisco, fewer people were homeless due to drug use, the homeless population consisted of twice the percentage (29%) of LGBTQ people than the overall population, and 61% of the homeless population were residents of San Francisco when they became homeless.⁶ With all these statistics at play, it is inevitable that there will always exist some simplifications of problems or a population so that some final action can be taken and processed, but this varied population and the forces that lead to homelessness can be appreciated more fully when this population is allowed to interact with other populations in the public space. Indeed, understanding the complexity of their lives may change whether or not the homeless are considered to have chosen their state or whether they are forced into it. The significance of this will become clear in the next section.

⁴ Sam Davis, *Designing for the Homeless: Architecture that Works* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004), 14-16.

⁵ San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, "Homelessness in a Progressive City: Targeting causes, proposing solutions" July 17, 2002, accessed 4/16/2014 @ <http://www.spur.org/publications/spur-report/2002-07-17/homelessness-progressive-city>

⁶ "2013 San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey." Accessed 4/20/2014 @ <http://www.sfgov3.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=4819>

The Case of San Francisco

The redevelopment of San Francisco proves to be a valuable case for understanding how the altering of the built environment proves to not just define who is neighbor but also to define the status of that neighbor. In San Francisco the redevelopment of downtown required not just the physical space to be altered, but it also required the city and the courts to weigh in on if homelessness was a choice or a status. In an effort to change the built environment of downtown, those in control of the built environment had to define who they were interacting with and who they were attempting to displace.

The city of San Francisco sought to redevelop its downtown space in order to revitalize the economy and foster greater tourist engagement with the city; however, in order to do this it needed to evacuate certain people from occupying those spaces and dwelling in them.⁷ As Zusha Elinson explains, due to the inability to address the homeless in public space, “the city has simply removed public seating over the last two decades. Benches in Civic Center Plaza were removed in the 1990s. Those in nearby United Nations Plaza were ripped out in the middle of the night in 2001, to discourage the homeless from congregating and camping there.”⁸ The desire to evacuate people from

⁷ Even though I look at development and the activities surrounding it in the recent past, this problem still continues today in San Francisco. Recently, San Francisco has sought to redevelop its Tenderloin district, which was a traditional space for the homeless, in an attempt to encourage more young tech workers to move into the city. As a part of this development, a rather aggressive method of street cleaning has been implemented. Massoud Hayoun, “Activists Say San Francisco Trying to Wash Away the Homeless,” February 19, 2014, Al-Jazeera America. Accessed 4/20/2014 @ <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/2/18/san-francisco-tensionbetweenhomelessandsecondtechboomers.html>

⁸ Zusha Elinson, “A Renewed Public Push for Somewhere to Sit Outdoors.” New York Times January 29, 2012, on page A23A of the National edition. Accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/us/in-san-francisco-a-push-for-public-benches.html>

certain public areas went beyond the removal of benches. For example, San Francisco's Union Square underwent a \$25 million renovation in part because the space was no longer used by shoppers because of the relative comfort that the space provided for the homeless.⁹ The redesign of the square opened up the space by removing many of the design elements of the square which offered some protection and an innocuous place to place one's possessions -- something required if one has more than just a few shopping bags to look after. In an effort to clear up items and people from the park, the redesign eliminated the elements (i.e. hedge groves, benches, solid structures) that provided a sense of security for one who desired to dwell and rest at length in that space instead of pass through it or take a brief rest.¹⁰

In complement to the redesign of the public space and in an attempt to guarantee the intended goals of the newly redeveloped built environment, San Francisco introduced the Matrix program which enforced the desired commercial outcomes of the newly designed public space through hard and soft forms of power, but in doing so they ended up redefining the legal status of the homeless person. Half of the Matrix program encouraged people into shelters (soft power) while the other half of the program reintroduced the police enforcement of ordinances (hard power) which had fallen out of favor due to political backlash considering these measures too harsh.¹¹ These ordinances included the prohibition of a number of activities from the benign such as public urination, dumping of refuse, public camping, and obstructing sidewalks to the more

⁹ Davis, 60.

¹⁰ Many of these changes which emphasize clear sight lines in order to police an environment are currently formalized through the program entitled Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED).

¹¹ Heather MacDonald, "San Francisco's Matrix Program for the Homeless," *Criminal Justice Ethics*, Vol. 14, 1 (1995):79; See also Maria Foscarinis, Kelly Cunningham-Bowers, and Kristen E. Brown, "Out of Sight-Out of Mind?: The Continuing Trend Toward the Criminalization of Homelessness," *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* Vol. VI, 2 (1999):152-156.

serious such as graffiti and public drug use. While this may seem like a well-rounded method for addressing the problem of homelessness in a city, when the hard forms of power were challenged in the courts, the city and the California courts claimed that anyone who remained homeless because they did not accept the soft forms of power was rightfully subjected to the hard forms of power because he or she had a choice to remain outdoors and in the public or to live and dwell in a shelter. It was the court's belief that people could be punished for sleeping, urinating, or taking up space for an extended period of time in public if there was some opportunity for those persons to do so in a more private setting.¹² Simply stated, homelessness was declared to be a choice instead of an involuntary status like race, sexual orientation, or physical disability. Ultimately, in an effort to define how a space should be occupied and experienced, San Francisco had to make certain claims about the freedom and agency of persons as it relates to them being considered a neighbor.

Evident in San Francisco's redesign and policing of the space is the distinction of single-minded space and open-minded space and the resulting consequences of these viewpoints. The key distinctions between these two spaces involve the activities allowed in the space, the speed at which a place is used, and the desire for human interaction within the space. As Michael Walzer explains, single-minded space is designed by those who have only one thing in mind, and it is used by similarly single-minded citizens who tend to be privileged and who are "characteristically in a hurry."¹³ As Walzer claims,

¹² Maria Foscarinis, "Downward Spiral: Homelessness and Its Criminalization," *Yale Law & Policy Review*, Vol. 14, 1 (1996): 36-41; MacDonald, 80. Also see ch.5 of Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (NY: The Guilford Press, 2003).

¹³ Michael Walzer "Pleasures and Costs of Urbanity," in *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of Our Times*, edited by Philip Kasinitz (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 321, 324.

single-minded spaces tend to favor commerce, which has been the primary reason for redevelopment of space.¹⁴ Ivan Illich echoes this relationship between single-mindedness and the limiting of the functions of common space. Illich claims that the enclosure of the commons often functions as an “environmentally-induced redefinition of people as consumers.”¹⁵ In contrast to single-minded consumerist space is open-minded space which does not have singular intended uses and which is designed for people willing to accommodate and take an interest in other people and their activities.¹⁶ And associated with this accommodation and interest is the willingness to move more slowly through a space and to appreciate others who want/need to dwell in an area. While he ultimately values open-minded space, Walzer makes clear that there is a necessary balance. There exists both room and a need for both types of spaces, but as Walzer writes, “the reiteration of single-mindedness at one public site after another seems to me something that civilized societies should avoid.... Open minded space has in the past been a breeding ground for mutual respect, political solidarity, civil discourse, and it makes sense to suggest that without it all these will be put at risk.”¹⁷ As is evident in the case of

¹⁴ Walzer, 328.

¹⁵ Ivan Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past: Lectures and Addresses, 1978-1990* (NY: M. Boyars, 1992), 52.

¹⁶ Walzer, 321.

¹⁷ Walzer, 324. The distinction and concern between these two types of space easily goes unnoticed when we have possession of enough space and tools. The lack of open-minded space is not easily noticeable when this lack does not interfere with basic needs. Jeremy Waldron helps make clear how often we define certain spaces based on our ability to provide for ourselves. He writes: “The streets and subways, they say, are for commuting from home to office. They are not for sleeping; sleeping is something one does at home. The parks are for recreations like walking and informal ball-games, things for which one's own yard is a little too confined. Parks are not for cooking or urinating; again, these are things one does at home. Since the public and the private are complementary, the activities performed in public are to be the complement of those appropriately performed in private. This complementarity works fine for those who have the benefit of both sorts of places. However, it is disastrous for those who must live their whole lives on common land.” Waldron, 301. Obviously there is a relationship between defining these spaces and claiming whether one chooses to perform an act in the public or whether they are compelled.

Recent recommendations by a San Francisco Civil Grand Jury about the use of Golden Gate Park make it abundantly clear that single-minded uses favored by a wealthier citizen still actively dominate policy. City and County of San Francisco Civil Grand Jury, 2012-2013, “Golden Gate Park’s Homeless Population Are San Francisco’s Policies Serving Us Well?”

San Francisco, the transformation of the built environment into more single-minded spaces required the redefinition of the people who occupied those spaces and justification for the use of hard power against those people. The critical need for the preservation of open-minded space and what is required to guarantee it is what Ivan Illich speaks so forcefully about through his reading of the Good Samaritan story.

Ivan Illich and the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Much of Ivan Illich's work concerns itself with the malformation of people and of certain activities when the activities are institutionalized and detached from the reality of everyday lives. His reading of the famous Good Samaritan story (Lk 10:25-37) suggests something similar, and it should do this given that it is one of the key lenses Illich uses to sum up his career and work in his interviews with David Cayley. Illich believes that the story is often misread and that the story is not about how to act towards a neighbor; rather, focus must be paid to verse 29 and the question of "who is my neighbor?" For Illich, the emphasis of the story must be placed more on when the Samaritan chooses the beaten man as his neighbor and less on the acts of service because Illich believes there is no end to the abuse which one can inflict when service is the only goal. The Samaritan story also proves to be a critical text for this issue because exegesis of the story often addresses issues of purity and order which are frequently invoked when people advocate removing the homeless from certain parts of town.¹⁸

The first key part of Illich's reading of the Good Samaritan story is that the story

¹⁸ For an account on the various ways disease, purity, and order are invoked in relation to the homeless and experienced as threat to "civility", see Randall Amster, "Patterns of Exclusion: Sanitizing Space, Criminalizing Homelessness," *Social Justice*, Vol. 30, 1 (2003).

presents a radical break in defining the neighbor that was motivated by an encounter with a suffering body. Illich explains that in antiquity one had an obligation to be hospitable to those within his or her culture, but there was no necessary commitment outside of one's social group.¹⁹ Illich describes that the story shows how the Samaritan owed no act of hospitality. The Samaritan chose to be hospitable against the dominant understandings of what was appropriate behavior. But, according to Illich, this new form of hospitality requires "bodily presence" and the witness of someone who was "being drowned in carnality."²⁰ Any attempt to move a person and his or her bodily presence out of public view will make the Samaritan's much lauded act improbable if not impossible. That is true even if one forces the person to move in order to help them. In removing the person from public view Illich claims that "the 'I' who experiences is replaced by an abstract point where many different statistical charts intersect," and that "the most destructive effect of development is its tendency to distract my eye from your face with the phantom, humanity, that I ought to love."²¹ We need to be present to others, and Illich's reading of the Good Samaritan story reminds us not to abstract people in the construction of a process to help them or the greater community. The failure to heed this warning and the failure to pay attention to the body leads to nothing less than the disembodiment of the I-Thou relationship, which serves as the ground for respect and the integrity of the subject

¹⁹ Ivan Illich and David Cayley, *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich As Told to David Cayley* (Toronto: Anansi, 2005), 51.

²⁰ Illich, *Rivers*, 51, 207. Likewise, Illich pays special attention to the physical nature of the discomfort of the Samaritan when he saw the wounded man. He points to the Greek word for disease *spilágchnon*, meaning an inner physical discomfort, and Luther's translation of this as *jammern*, which signifies a guttural lament. Illich, *Rivers*, 222. Illich's focus on the role of bodily presence in this parable would seem to be supported by the many theologians over history who have seen the Samaritan story as a parable that reiterates the significance of incarnation and Christ's saving work. James F. Keenan, *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 118-120.

²¹ Ivan Illich, "Twenty-Six Years Later: Ivan Illich in conversation with Majid Rahema," in *The Post-Development Reader*, compiled and introduced by Majid Rahema with Victoria Bawtree (Zed Books, 1997): 106.

according to Martin Buber.²² The second key aspect of Illich's reading of the Good Samaritan story is the formalization of service that often occurs as a result of ignoring carnality. He suggests that there always exists a desire to legalize and formalize the relationships that we must have with one another.²³ In doing so radical hospitality, which the Samaritan showed, is turned into a more formalized service. This completion of this formalized service replaces the actual person as the telos of one's action.²⁴ Illich claims that this shift is at the heart of "liberal fantasy" which can do horrible things to people in the guise of helping them.²⁵ While this shift to a more formalized service certainly enables mobilization of resources to address the problem, it quite frequently enables a dominating power over the people it initially claims to serve. Indeed, on this point Illich is even self-critical of his earlier work.

Later on in life Illich believed that his own claims for persons' greater social responsibility towards one another often quickly devolved into the type of liberal development he vehemently critiqued.²⁶ Almost paradoxically, he admits that people will be better served at times if we accept a degree of powerlessness to fix all the elements of our society. The drive to perfection often enslaves and an appreciation of some tragic elements in life may liberate. In a speech on another social issue, Illich claims that against some injustices people must first physically enter a space and propagate a "horrified

²² Illich, *Rivers*, 222.

²³ Illich, *Rivers*, 47. On this point Illich parallels Adam Smith on sympathy. For Smith, the formalization of these ties and commitments is valuable and desired as it allows proper treatment of each other not to exist simply on whim, but Smith warns of the great harm that can occur when sympathy, which is enlivened by personal connection and proximity, is not allowed to reinvigorate and critique that formalized process.

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), III.I.94-109. See also, Fonna Forman-Barzilai, "Sympathy in Space(s): Adam Smith on Proximity". *Political Theory*. 33, no. 2 (2005):189-217.

²⁴ Illich, *Rivers*, 52.

²⁵ Illich, *Rivers*, 207.

²⁶ Illich, "Twenty-Six Years Later," 108.

silence.”²⁷ This of course requires bodily presence. Accepting powerlessness or entering a space with a horrified silence should not be confused with inaction or pointless ritual. Indeed, Illich makes it abundantly clear throughout his work that ritual has the ability to train, diagnose, and heal.²⁸ His suggestions are an attempt to come to terms with some degree of inevitable tragedy and to acknowledge that often a certain quality of life is sacrificed in the drive for progress.²⁹ Illich certainly is not against development itself; the concern is a development that narrows our moral boundaries and shifts the goal of our attention in the process.

Illich’s reading of the Samaritan story should be held apart from other arguments which privilege face-to-face relationships because he avoids the traps often created by those advocating face-to-face relationships. As Iris Marion Young makes clear, those who favor developing face-to-face relationships as a central practice of justice often argue for near-utopian small decentralized communities as the solution to anonymous and bureaucratic institutions.³⁰ This desire for small decentralized communities suggests an ideal purity in politics and can actually foster greater homogeneity which serves to exclude those who don’t meet the community’s norms. Illich avoids utopian purity by preserving room for the tragic, and he suggests the possibility of dwelling with the tragic instead of exerting undue force to overcome it. Similarly, Illich’s reading of the

²⁷ Illich, *In the Mirror*, 31.

²⁸ Lee Hoinacki, “Reading Ivan Illich,” in Lee Hoinacki and Carl Mitcham, *The Challenges of Ivan Illich: A Collective Reflection* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 4-5.

²⁹ For example, think of the person who in the effort to fight disease finds themselves forever interned in a hospital apart from the people and the things that make them feel at home. In the guise of progress the person finds that the sense of dwelling has been sacrificed. What occurs in this example as well as in city redevelopment is the process Illich described as “iatrogenesis” in which the cure for a problem often defines agency, has implied values, and undermines the people taking part of the cure. See Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1976).

³⁰ Iris Marion Young, “City Life and Difference,” in *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of Our Times*, edited by Philip Kasinitz (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 258-260.

Samaritan story preserves the encounter with the stranger instead of lapsing into the idealization of community because he does not suggest that the difference between persons must be overcome. For these reasons, his reading of the Samaritan story proves a compelling resource as development is considered because his response preserves the heterogeneity and complexity of the city.

Conclusion

As redevelopment of cities continues, it will be critical that at least some of the spaces built will foster the presence and interactions necessary for those in the Samaritan's position to make the choice that the Samaritan made. The central lesson from Illich's reading of the Good Samaritan story is that even with the best intentions one's ability to properly attend to the other will irrevocably be altered when the one who is to be served becomes anonymous and displaced. This ability will require even more attention when attention to the other is not the primary act. While certainly worried about the injustices performed by the powerful, Illich draws attention to those processes which allow injustices to flourish. As this paper has claimed, our attentions should be drawn to the power of the built environment to accomplish more than physical displacement of persons. Even those who have power to construct the built environment end up being subjected to it. As was evident in San Francisco, the construction of the built environment redefines neighbors and affects the ability to even see another as a potential neighbor with compelling needs who suffers through no choice of his or her own. With this in mind, our cities should be recognized as sites that significantly form our attentions and that our attentions must be allowed the opportunity to attend to the hopeful as well as to

the tragic.

Time To Enclose The Enclosers With Marx and Illich¹

Gustavo Esteva

This essay can be seen as an invitation to use a peculiar window to examine the current conditions of the world and to resist the horror falling on us. It is a window constructed with the juxtaposition of the ideas of Illich and Marx.

Marx in Illich's Thinking

Marxists don't read Illich; Illichians don't read Marx. This is a general rule, which of course has important exceptions. But even the very few who read both thinkers don't see a clear connection between them or they prefer to keep them separated. In juxtaposing here their ideas, I am trying to show that such an operation is very useful in the current conjuncture.

Illich knew very well Marx's critique of political economy and the capitalist mode of production. He acknowledged that Marx's main conclusions were still valid in the second part of the 20th century and fully assumed his socialist ideals. With this and other intellectual and political foundations, Illich constructed his own theoretical and political path. In a sense, he started where Marx ended.

Marx was not a Marxist, as he explicitly wrote. He was not rigidly attached to any dogma. His thinking underwent important transformations during the course of his

¹ This essay is an entirely reformulated version of my intervention in the conference "After the Crisis: The Thought of Ivan Illich Today," Oakland, August 1-3, 2013, and I am using in it edited fragments of other essays, particularly Esteva 2014.

life. Illich followed carefully, with full understanding, the evolution of Marx. He was able to find in the young Marx a source of philosophical inspiration, which gave him the opportunity to obtain a better understanding of the economic writings of Marx.² This is particularly evident when he examines the double alienation produced by capitalism: how the fruits of our work become alien to us, are expropriated from us, and how our creative activity itself also becomes alien to us, ideas first formulated by Marx.

Illich anticipated the direction of Marx's thinking that most of us only discovered in 1982, when Teodor Shanin published *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, a book written as a systematic exploration of what Marx wrote in the last ten years of his life and which had never been published in full. Marx's writings discussed by Shanin are in open contradiction with well-established beliefs of most Marxists and offer a picture of Marx very different from the conventional perception. Some of the main elements of such "discovery" were already known in the West but most Marxists ignored or marginalized them. Not Illich. He knew, for example, the collection of essays by Marx and Engels edited by Blackstock and Hoselitz and published by The Free Press in the US in 1952 and he derived from them the pertinent lessons.³ And Illich knew, of course, *The Civil War in France*, in which Marx adopted a position about the state and the tasks of the proletarian revolution that very few Marxists seem to know, and those who know it, like Lenin, reject or abandon ideas of that book that openly contradict their obsession with seizing power and using the State apparatuses for the revolution (Lenin 1917).

² Teodor Shanin, a well known Marxist and Marxologist, considers that the points of correspondence between Ivan and Marx are very clear, "especially if we consider the early Marx and related arguments". (Personal correspondence).

³ In a conversation with Ivan about the young Marx, in the 1990s, he explicitly alluded to this book, which I knew.

Tools for Conviviality and Marx

In the preface to the Spanish edition of *Tools for Conviviality* (1978), Illich tells the story of how that book was written. In January 1972 a group of Latin Americans gathered at CIDOC to discuss a thesis first formulated in 1971. Successive essays, published in CIDOC (for example *CIDOC Cuaderno* N. 80 and N. 1017) and in different journals (eg. *CoEvolution Quarterly* and *The New York Review of Books*), show Illich's intellectual journey before the book took its final form for an audience of Canadian lawyers. Participants in his seminar in CIDOC between 1971 and 1973, wrote Illich, "will recognize (in the book) their ideas, and often their words."

There were among those Latin Americans some Marxists and young people influenced by Marxian ideas directly or through Liberation Theology, including Paulo Freire and other Latin American thinkers.ⁱ All of them were attracted by the "thesis" of 1971. I don't know if that "thesis," originally formulated in Spanish by Illich and Valentina Borremans, has been published in English. It is not well known, even in Spanish, in spite of the fact that it can be seriously considered the very foundation of Illich's work. The "thesis" circulated in a document called *La Necesidad de un Techo Común (El Control Social de la Tecnología)*, [*The Need of a Common Roof (The Social Control of Technology)*] (2006). Here is a long quote from this text, in my translation:

The social control of systems of production is the basis for any social restructuring: the new phase in which technology already entered allows and demands a new determination of such control.

1) The social ownership of the means of production; 2) The social control of the mechanisms of distribution, and 3) the community agreement on the self-limitation of some technological dimensions, but only as a whole, constitute the basis for the social control of production in a society.

In the first phases of industrialization, the first two aspects seemed so

important that they did not allow enough development of the thinking on the third.

In our opinion, what today is necessary is the political control of the technological characteristics of industrial products and of the intensity of professional services.

This new politics consists in the search for a community agreement on the technological profile of a common roof under which all the members of a society want to live. Rather than the construction of a launching platform, from which only a few members of the society are sent to the stars.

This new politics is a voluntary and communitarian self-limitation, the search of maximum limits in institutional productivity and the consumption of services and commodities, in accordance with the needs considered, within that community, satisfactory for each individual.

The social control of the mode of production gets a wider meaning in the current era of technological development. In the first phases of industrialization, the attention, for good reason, had to concentrate on the ownership of the means of production and on the equitable distribution of products.

In the phase in which we are since the 1960s, the social definition of a maximum, in relation with some basic characteristics of the products of a society, should be the most important political goal.

... We call “technological imperative” the idea that if any technological achievement is possible anywhere in the world, it should be made and put at the service of some men, no matter the price the other members of the society should pay for this.

After criticizing how both capitalist and socialist societies blindly obey the “technological imperative” and prevent the construction of socialism, Illich and Borremans describe how this leads to placing the control of the society in the hands of some technocrats, elected by a political party or a group of capitalists. We consider, observes Illich, “that Kripto-Stalinism is based precisely in this: in winning the social control of the means of production, to justify the central control of the products, at the service of the unlimited growth of production.” The authors continue, “The rejection of the “technological imperative” is the basis to start the search for the technological dimensions to be subjected to the judgment of the people, for the majority to determine under which limits they want to live.”

Illich and Borremans were fully aware that this idea was entirely opposed to the

dominant mentality of their time, in both socialist and capitalist worlds. They considered that in super-capitalist countries “the environmental contamination that makes the Earth unable to sustain human life and the super-determination of the individual that renders him impotent to survive out of an artificial environment, are already creating the consciousness in a small minority of the need to think about the urgency of limiting all production. Finally, they assumed that the leadership for the necessary new politics would come from some countries in Latin America, Africa or Asia.

In August 1972 Illich, with the help of Valentina Borremans, prepared an annotated bibliography based in his personal, often hand-written cards, that he used for his weekly seminar. The idea was “to help the people attending CIDOC, who are studying a common theme, to get acquainted with each other... During the years 1973-1975 several people will have taken the initiative to organize seminars or workshops at CIDOC all dealing with a common theme: “Multiple fundamental and independent limits to industrial growth.” A careful study of the bibliography itself and Illich’s notes about most books and essays included in it may illustrate the direction of his thinking and his connection with Marx’ ideas, through the eyes of heterodox Marxists like David Barkin or Erich Fromm. Time and again, in this text published in *CIDOC Cuaderno N.80* (1973), as in all his work, Illich embraced the socialist ideals formulated by Marx and demonstrated how they cannot be reached without an institutional inversion. The case of David Barkin illustrates the convergence of reflections.

Barkin, a Marxist who knew nothing about Illich or his writings, wrote a critique of the Chilean path to socialism in clear coincidence with the direction of Ivan’s thinking. Ivan invited him to CIDOC and in their conversations he asked him a lot of questions

about Cuba and similar themes. Barkin became a careful reader of Illich. Similarly, Fromm and Illich were friends and Marx was a recurrent theme in their conversations, even in public.

A story told by Teodor Shanin can also be used to illustrate the relationship of Illich and Marx:

More than thirty years ago (1983), on discovering in one of our early conversations that Illich had never seen “the holy land” I invited, and eventually accompanied and hosted him on his visit there. He agreed also to meet my students at Haifa University where I then taught. The University turned out in strengths to see the famous man. I warned him that a group of my brightest students originating in Latin America will challenge him from the orthodox Marxist positions in which they were deeply immersed and knowledgeable. Illich grinned and began his address with Volume 1 of the *Das Kapital*. In the first chapter of this highly important book, he said, Marx singled out two fundamental concepts of “use value” (defined by needs) and “exchange value” (defined by market) and proceeded to develop further the concept of exchange value all the way to the general definition of capitalism. Illich then went on to develop the concept of “use value” towards a parallel ecological and humanist picture of society in which we actually live. It was a total surprise to those in the audience who had read *Das Kapital* for years to understand how much they learnt anew, listening in intense silence. Then, their ovation at the end. To my knowledge Illich himself never went back to the topic or published what he said then. It was just a moment of reflection, a spark and a bit of fun arguing with interesting students in an exotic land (Shanin 2012).

I can also present this argument in personal terms. I met Ivan Illich, for the first time, in 1983. Ivan, internationally renowned and infamous, drawing brilliant intellectuals and activists from all over the world, did not draw us from Mexico’s Marxist Left, in spite of the fact that CIDOC was just 40 miles from where many of us were living. For most of us, he was just a reactionary priest; his fields – education, health, transportation – were irrelevant, mere services we would deal with once we were in power, after eliminating capitalist exploitation. Ivan described well our attitude in 1970. “We are used to considering schools as a variable, dependent on the political and

economic structure. If we can change the style of political leadership, or promote the interest of one class or another, or switch from private to public ownership of the means of production, we assume the school system will change as well.” (Illich 1971, 73)

However, we did not read him then.

In 1983 I was invited to a seminar in Mexico City on the social construction of energy with Wolfgang Sachs. Ivan was there. I was mesmerized. José María Sbert was also there and invited us to his house. It was my first personal interaction with Ivan. That very night, I embarked on my Illich *studium*. A little later, I started to collaborate with him. Still later, slowly, we became friends.

Reading Illich carefully, I could not find any fundamental contradiction with my theoretical and political convictions, for a long time based on my reading of Marx, particularly to understand and transcend the capitalist mode of production. My fascination with Ivan was born out of the fact that his ideas, his words, his writings, were a brilliant and articulated presentation of ordinary people’s discourse. He was describing ways of living and being that I encountered all the time at the grassroots, in my *Zapotec* grandmother’s world; the world of other indigenous peoples; the world of *campesinos* or *marginales*. “Vernacular” and “convivial,” two words that are central to Ivan’s work, were magnificent symbols for my people’s worlds. I heard them there first, not in reading Ivan. All those pre-Illich years, I felt and sensed and smelled and touched and experienced those words and what they symbolized, in the villages, at the grassroots.

Illich’s work held up for me a brilliantly lit torch in the middle of all the intellectual darkness defining the experts’ reality. Illich stood out from the majority of published voices, illuminating for me what I could not make clear sense of before at the

grassroots. His was neither a new theory nor an ideology for them. In my conversation with peasants or marginals, each time I shared Ivan's ideas, they showed no surprise. I began to call their comfortable familiarity with Illich's ideas the "A ha Effect." "A ha!," they said, every time I quoted Ivan. Yes, they knew, better yet, understood by the seat of their pants, what he was articulating. No surprise there. But hearing their own experiences and ideas so well articulated in Ivan's words held up for them a magnificent mirror affirming what they already knew from common sense.

Ivan once said, "People can see what scientists and administrators can't." And he said something more: that the people in our countries, rather than the dissident elite in the advanced ones, were the ones implementing the political inversion he conceived in *Tools for Conviviality*.

In the last words of that book (Ivan commented to David Cayley) I said that I knew in which direction things would happen but not what would bring them to that point. At that time I believed in some big, symbolic event, in something similar to the Wall Street crash. Instead of that, it is hundreds of millions of people just using their brains and trusting their senses. We now live in a world in which most of those things that industry and government do are misused by people for their own purposes. (Cayley 1992, p.117).

People are "just using their brains and trusting their senses." That was exactly my experience. Using Ivan's terminology and concepts – "convivial," "vernacular," "common sense"—I was able to see very clearly what ordinary, common people were thinking and doing ... beyond Marx, with Illich. (See Esteva 2012).

Illich was not a Marxist. Like Marx himself. He was neither a post-Marxist nor a neo-Marxist thinker. He was just a careful reader of Marx. He derived from his reading the pertinent lessons how to see the real nature of capitalism, the forms of alienation it generates, the exploitation defining it, and how to leave behind such evil in order to

embrace socialist ideals. Illich also observed carefully how Marx's ideas were used and abused in the real world—in the name of Marx all kinds of contradictory hypotheses, interpretations and social experiments have been conceived. In my view, he constructed the foundation of his thinking on Marx “territory,” in the same way that he fully used ideas and insights from Everett Reimer, Jacques Ellul, Leopold Kohr, Karl Polanyi, Paul Goodman or the Gospel, whose traces can also be found in the thesis of 1971. In my view, we cannot fully understand Illich's contributions without clear awareness of such foundations.

I don't know why the many connections between Marx and Illich which have been evident for me since the 1980s when I started to read Illich, and that I discussed with him and his Marxist friends like Shanin and Barkin, have been for so long ignored or explicitly denied. They are not necessarily a specific blindness. However, Ivan himself offers a clue to understand this phenomenon. In 1974 Illich took the decision to publish together, in one volume in Spanish, *Energy and Equity* and *Creative Unemployment*, after the criticism he got following *Tools for Conviviality*, because he considered these two essays as the postscript to *Tools*. In the introduction to that edition, he classifies his critics in three categories. The first category included a number of critics disqualifying the book because it did not use “the analytical categories in which they founded their faith.” From those critics, wrote Ivan, he learned to avoid, even more than before, “good, honest and beautiful words...already enslaved, disincarnated and painted by the new inquisitors and those searching for security under their shadow.” He was forced to include among those words “socialism” for all the vices and simplifications embedded in the word—to use it “required great circumspection.” (2006, 42) Both Marxists and anti-Marxists could not

find in Illich the language of their “churches” and apparently could not relate Illich’s radical critique of the idolatrous nature of capitalism and its associated evils with the Marxist jargon (which Illich carefully avoided) or even with Marxian ideas or categories—that Illich used with a lot of care and circumspection. Very few were able to enjoy living elaborations explicitly establishing those connections, like the audience of the Shanin anecdote I mentioned.

Commoning In The New Society

In the mid 1980s Illich invited some of his friends to talk about “After Development, What?” It was the time in which the idea of post-development became fashionable, the years of structural adjustment and “the lost decade for development” in Latin America, the years in which we discovered the nature of the beast. “Development” was a worldwide experiment that in the experience of most people on Earth miserably failed. To share our reflections after three years of conversations, we produced *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. For us, “development” was at the center of a powerful but fragile semantic constellation; the time had come to dip into the archeology of the key concepts constituting it and to call attention to its ethnocentric and violent nature. Wolfgang Sachs, the editor of the book, wrote in the introduction: “At a time when development has evidently failed as a socioeconomic endeavor, it has become of paramount importance to liberate ourselves from its dominion over our minds. This book is an invitation to review the developmental model of reality and to recognize that we all wear not merely tinted, but tainted glasses if we take part in the prevailing development discourse.” (Sachs 2010: xix)

In the entry titled, “Development,” my contribution to the book, after an attempt to “unveil the secret of development and see it in all its conceptual starkness,” convinced that “from the unburied corpse of development every kind of pest had started to spread,” I described my experience beyond development with the idea of commoning. My essay ended with an invitation to celebrate and a call for political action. I did celebrate “the appearance of new commons, creatively opened...after the failure of the developers’ strategies to transform traditional people into economic men.” The essay was also a plea “for political controls to protect those new commons and to offer common folks a more favorable social context for their activities and innovations.” (Sachs 2010: 19-20)

Today, “it has become increasingly clear that we are poised between an old world that no longer works and a new one struggling to be born. Surrounded by an archaic order of centralized hierarchies on the one hand and predatory markets on the other, presided over by a state committed to planet-destroying economic growth, people around the world are searching for alternatives.” (Bollier and Helfrich 2012, xii) There is indeed universal consensus that we are at the end of an historical period, but the identification of the corpses—what is it that has ended—is highly controversial. In short hand, for my purpose here, the list of candidates would include: *development, neoliberalism, the American empire, capitalism, economic society* and both *modernity* and *postmodernity*, as well as *5000 years of patriarchy*ⁱⁱ.

It is clear that we cannot accommodate into the conventional notion of commons or community some contemporary novelties, which are currently called “new commons.” We need to make evident the similarities and differences of a thousand different forms of social existence which are beyond the private threshold but are not public spaces, and in

which the free encounter of forms of doing things, speaking them and living them—art (*techné*)—expresses a culture and the opportunity for cultural creation. Such historical and anthropological exploration may enrich our perception of the present, revealing what has been hidden by modernity and discovering the options opened, as urgent challenges, in the time of the death of development.

All this should be explored to seriously assert that commons, at least certain kinds of commons, are already the cell of the new society. As usual, this new society is emerging in the womb of the old one and is often hidden and distorted by the mentality of the latter. One of the most important and urgent challenges we face today is to clean our gaze, in order to be able to clearly identify the novelty of this sociological creation by ordinary folks, who all over the planet are forging the new society through a new kind of revolution, a silent and almost invisible revolution.

The first bourgeois and proletarians died with no awareness of their new social condition. They were unaware of the fact that they had already created a new productive regime. They were trapped in the old mentality. We don't have the same opportunity, we cannot be blind to what is being created, we cannot ignore its very nature. Our full awareness is a condition needed to escape from the current horror. Juxtaposing Marx and Illich can be very useful for that purpose.

The Post-industrial, Convivial Path

There is increasing awareness that the current trends and the prevailing structure of our tools and institutions are a very serious threat to the survival of the human species. As Ivan Illich warned us a long time ago, our institutions have become not only

frustrating and counter-productive, but also destructive of society as a whole. (Illich 1973) Reading today what Illich called his “pamphlets” of the early 1970s, we cannot avoid a feeling of sadness for a path not taken. But we can no longer ignore his warnings.

Winds of change currently cross the Earth. As the Zapatista speaker *subcomandante Marcos* observed, we are in a peculiar historical moment in which to explore the future we are forced to explore the past. For many, such exploration offers a fresh reading of *The Magna Carta* (1215). (Linebaugh 2008) They find in it inspiration to reclaim or regenerate old commons and to resist the new enclosures, policies and actions destroying both nature and society at a planetary scale. Many others are engaged in the celebration of their own non-Western traditions to reinvent their paths. These explorations seem to converge in the “active movements of human commoning and the worldwide demands to share wealth.” (Linebaugh 2008: 280)

Everywhere, millions of people, perhaps billions, are regenerating their own worlds in a new kind of revolution, one whose sense of proportion is in radical contrast to most revolutionary traditions. This revolution is going beyond development and globalization; marginalizing and limiting the economic sphere; reestablishing politics and ethics at the center of social life; reclaiming *comunalidad*ⁱⁱⁱ; assuming new political horizons beyond human rights and the nation-state; adopting radical pluralism; and aiming to create a world in which many worlds can be embraced using representative and participatory democracy as transitional forms towards radical democracy. (Lummis 1996)

In his “Cuernavaca pamphlets,” Illich shared the Rome Club’s concern about demographic and economic growth (Meadows et al. 1972) yet he took the argument further. For him, the expansion of services would produce more damage to culture than

the production of goods to the environment. His radical critique of the school, the health system and transportation (1971, 1974, 1975) illustrated what he called the counterproductivity of all modern institutions. After some threshold, they begin to produce the opposite of what they intend.

Illich formulated a radical critique of the industrial mode of production, capitalist or socialist, and the conditions for the convivial reconstruction of society. Too, he anticipated both the struggle to produce the needed political inversion and peoples' reactions in the time of the crisis – the current time. His ideas are a useful guide to understand what is happening in the world. As governments increasingly operate as mere administrators of private corporations, common people—for reasons of strict survival or in the name of old ideals—are reacting with vigor and imagination. Their initiatives are increasingly wide and radical, and are currently shaping the peaceful uprising resisting the mortal wave of global forces, destroying both nature and culture, while beginning a convivial reconstruction, following pathways very similar to those anticipated by Illich. According to Illich,

the present crisis of our major institutions ought to be welcomed as a crisis of revolutionary liberation because our present institutions abridge basic human freedom for the sake of providing people with more institutional outputs. This worldwide crisis of worldwide institutions can lead to a new consciousness about the nature of tools and to majority action for their control. If tools are not controlled politically, they will be managed in a belated technocratic response to disaster. Freedom and dignity will continue to dissolve into an unprecedented enslavement of man to his tools. (Illich 1973, 12)

And this is the point. Today. Both points. The current enslavement. The current opportunity. Millions of people are reacting in these dual ways.

“The nation-state has become so powerful that it cannot perform its stated functions,” wrote Illich. For him, the corporations and the professions can use the law

and the democratic system to establish their empire. American democracy could survive a victory by Giap, but could not survive the victory of the corporations. The total crisis makes obvious that “the nation-state has grown into the holding corporation for a multiplicity of tools, and the political parties into an instrument to organize stockholders for the occasional election of boards and presidents... They are useless at a moment of a general crash....” When this becomes clear for the people, the opportunity for change emerges. “The same general crisis that could easily lead to one-man rule, expert government, and ideological orthodoxy is also the great opportunity to reconstruct a political process in which all participate.” (Ídem: 109)

For Illich, socialist ideals could not be achieved without an inversion of our institutions and the substitution of convivial for industrial tools...and the retooling of society can only be achieved if socialist ideals are adopted. As an alternative to technocratic disaster, he proposed a convivial society which would be “the result of social arrangements that guarantee for each member the most ample and free access to the tools of the community and limit this freedom only in favor of another member’s equal freedom.” (Ídem: 12)

Forty years after this formulation, this is what seems to be happening. Conviviality, observes Hanns-Albert Steger, “is definitely no longer a futuristic utopia; it has become part of our present.” (Steger 1984) People have started to react to an epochal crisis and to an epistemic rupture. (Esteva 2009) Before governments in panic, given people’s mobilization as well as economic and political structures willing to do anything to keep their position, peoples’ mobilizations are taking the form of an uprising (Esteva 2012a):

- They are still resisting, but also enacting disobedience.
- They are protesting, while also beginning a radical rejection.
- They are challenging daily decisions—all the death, all the people in prison, all the environmental destruction—and at the same time challenging the legitimacy of the system itself, not only its operators. They are refusing to give to it their consent and are no longer willing to accept that representation is the synthesis of social consensus.
- They are increasingly assuming the moral and social obligation of refusing to obey an apparatus basically anonymous while affirming their independence from that apparatus—to stop being slaves of the tool, subsystems of the system^{iv}.
- They are acknowledging the decadence of the consumer society and the welfare state—a monopolistic and organizational capitalism mixed with the state.
- They are rejecting with increasing firmness the dominant democratic despotism, which becomes a mantle to simulate the political, economic, and technical imperialism to which more and more people are today subordinated—the system that transforms every electoral promise into another link of the chain imprisoning everyone.
- They are showing time and again that class domination is first of all domination of people's consciousness and of their confidence in themselves—extended when the idea of change is reduced to a change in leadership.
- And, step by step, they are articulating the terms of a social organization based in personal energy, that is, the energy every person can control; in the freedom regulated by the principles of customary law; in the re-articulation of the old triad:

person, tool and society; and all this supported in three classic pillars: friendship, hope and surprise.

In their autonomous centers for the production of knowledge, as an alternative to the institutional production of “truth,” that is, the statements through which people govern themselves (Foucault, 1980), people are reflecting on a new agenda.

As TINA (“There is no alternative”) became the hegemonic discourse, people are reacting with TATA (“There are a thousand alternatives”). Their democratic struggle, for a long time focused on more participation for those previously excluded, is now taking a different direction.

Many people are still involved in a struggle to improve formal, representative democracy, both to address the well-known vices of the electoral processes and to improve the operation of the government. Other people are struggling to introduce or strengthen participatory democracy, widening the areas of people’s participation in the functions of government, through popular initiatives (for norms and laws), referendum and plebiscite, recall of elected officers, participatory budgeting, transparency, accountability and others. More and more people, however, are trying to place both formal and participatory democracy at the service of radical democracy. (Lummis 1996) “Radical democracy” has been practiced since time immemorial by communities all over the world and is usually associated with autonomy. In a process that implies reorganizing the society from the bottom-up, the idea is to extend such ways of governing to the entire society, under the very basic and logical assumption that democracy should be where the people are, not at the top of the society. Too, many people possess the generalized

awareness that their representatives are not representing them but are increasingly abandoning their responsibilities and their formal commitment to the public interest and the common good.

Ecological awareness, the consciousness of the severity of the environmental destruction, is combined today with political awareness, the consciousness that our dominant political institutions can no longer be trusted. “*¡Basta!* Enough!” said the Zapatistas in 1994. “*¡Que se vayan todos!* All of them should go!” was said ten years later in Argentina. “My dreams don’t fit into your ballot box,” said the *indignados* in Spain in 2011. “We will not leave until they leave!” proclaimed the Greeks that same year. For the first time in 200 years millions of Americans, the people who invented the modern model of democracy, found it dysfunctional—to be at the service of the 1%, not of the 99%, said the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011. All these movements don’t share a new political design or have a ready-made answer for their questions. They are involved in a variety of initiatives, many of which are called forms of localization as an alternative to both globalization and localism. They are rooting and affirming themselves more than ever in their own physical and cultural places, resisting the mortal wave of global forces, but at the same time opening their arms, minds and hearts to others like them, to create wide coalitions of the discontents—in a process that is transforming their resistance into liberation.

The time has come to enclose the enclosers. Commoning—reclaiming and regenerating our commons and creating new commons beyond the dominant economic and political system—now defines the limits of the current era. “If the cell form of

capitalism is the commodity, the cellular form of a society beyond capital is the commons.” (Dyer-Whiteford, 2007)

Enclosing the Enclosers

Capitalism has been a continual war against autonomous subsistence, a war that defines the modern era. It started with the enclosure of the commons, continued uninterrupted during the last 500 years, and became more intense and violent during the neoliberal period with what has been called the “new enclosures.” The modern era, wrote Illich,

can be understood as that of an unrelenting 500-year war waged to destroy the environmental conditions for subsistence and to replace them by commodities produced within the frame of the new nation-state. In this war against popular cultures and their framework, the State was at first assisted by the clergies of the various churches, and later by the professionals and their institutional procedures. During this war, popular cultures and vernacular domains –areas of subsistence–were devastated on all levels. (Illich 1981, 139).

Zygmunt Bauman is probably right, paraphrasing Mark Twain, when he observes that the news that capitalism died seems somewhat exaggerated, given the extraordinary capacity of resurrection and regeneration this regime has demonstrated. (*The Guardian*, 10/18/2011). But it is useful, as a way to orient current social struggle, to explore whether capitalism’s natural parasitic capacity, causing it to feed off of other living organisms, will not be the cause of its own extinction.

The current limits to capital’s pattern of expansion have been the object of broad analysis in recent years while provoking a very intense theoretical debate among Marxists. For some of them, pre-capitalist procedures are being employed in a post-capitalist condition. Even though the system as a whole is still based on the appropriation

of surplus value in the productive sphere, in conventional Marxist terms, its dynamic is more and more in the hands of parasites. We would be living in a world of zombies dominated and controlled by vampires, and the latter could no longer be called “capitalists,” despite the fact that the main source of their accumulation is derived from a capitalist operation.

The plunder that characterizes this style of operation always confronts resistance and must resort, in order to impose itself, to pre-capitalist, colonial-style procedures based on the use of force. Even though zombies and vampires unite to actively displace workers from their achievements across 200 years of social struggle, their interests and behaviors separate and come into conflict, more so each time, as can be observed even in those that maintain, in a schizophrenic way, a dual condition.^v In any case, this is how the forces of capital are currently destroying the nation state, the political regime that was born with capitalism, and dismantling its democratic façade. Democracy was very useful for the expansion of capital and the operation of the market, but is an obstacle for dispossession, for the kind of violence now applied against autonomous subsistence.

If this is what we are dealing with, if this controversial hypothesis is correct, then social movements must adopt a radically different form of struggle. Many of them have begun to do it: their political intuitions also orient themselves towards a post-capitalist condition. The shape these movements are taking was clearly anticipated by Illich, who also described, in the tradition of Marx, the fundamental cell of the new society, currently emerging in the belly of the old: the commons.

All around the world, millions of people, perhaps billions, are enclosing the enclosers. They are not depriving the enclosers of their possessions, in a kind of reverse

expropriation. This is not what Marx anticipated. He assumed that the enclosure of the commons was the expropriation of the people by a few usurpers: the common land of the commoners, the majority of the people, expropriated by a few to create private property. (“Private,” in “private property,” implies *to deprive*.). Marxian revolution, to establish socialism, implied the transformation of private property into social property and would thus be the expropriation, by the people, of a few usurpers. (Marx 1959, T.I, 649). Today, this argument would be expressed by saying that the people, the majority of the people of the world, will expropriate the 80 persons (the usurpers) who have more material wealth than all of the world’s people combined; or, in terms of Occupy Wall Street if the 99% expropriated the wealth of the 1%.

Rather, today what the people are doing is to enact the institutional inversion anticipated by Illich—people dismantling and undermining the very foundation of capitalist operation and reclaiming autonomous subsistence. That is why we must replace communism, which has become a dirty word for many people, with commonism, the word coined by Nick Dyer-Whiteford (2007) to allude to the contemporary commons movement.

The Juxtaposition

There is today an intense search for a new social paradigm, under the assumption that the still dominant paradigm is already dead. A collection of essays produced around that theme has been presented in *Polis*, 11 (33). Writing for that issue, Manolo Callahan, a well-known Marxist, wrote “In Defense of Conviviality and the Collective Subject.” For him, such an urgent search for a new social paradigm requires reflection on the nature

of the current moment, which would be not only a particular set of “crises,” including an epochal crisis, but also an epistemological struggle. After observing that many social spaces “have become infused with or potentially animated by a conviviality,” he attempts to read Illich politically, much in the same way Harry Cleaver suggests for reading Marx, in order to engage him strategically.^{vi} “Toward that end, I briefly consider conviviality as a ‘methodology,’ or tool, for analysis and imagine it as a strategy in relation to an emerging ‘collective subject’.” Callahan applies this insight to the case of *Universidad de la Tierra Califas*, a project currently underway in the southern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California. He reads “its engagement with conviviality through insurgent learning and convivial research, an autonomous political praxis that embraces a collective subject and insists that knowledge production is a fundamental dimension of popular democratic processes and pre-figurative politics. At the core of UT Califas’ convivial reconstruction is an effort to make learning an on-going dimension of democratic renewal.”^{vii}

This is just one example of the way in which Marx’s and Illich’s ideas are currently juxtaposed, in a fruitful way, in both theory and practice. Of course, in doing so we need to be fully aware of the radical differences between the two men and their thought. Any attempt to fuse the two sets of ideas into a single body of ideas may become counterproductive. One critical distinguishing point is the difference between Marx’s critique of the *capitalist* mode of production and Illich’s critique of the *industrial* mode of production.

Perhaps some Illichians may feel dragged out of their comfort zone if they are invited to acknowledge that Illich’s ideas can only flourish out of capitalism and the

current society—to accommodate Illich’s ideas within the dominant theoretical and institutional framework would amount to a betrayal. And if the question is to seriously examine the nature of the still dominant regime and its current condition, Marx continues to provide very good guidance, as Illich knew very well.

San Pablo Etlá, June 2015.

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ⁱ In the “Acknowledgements” of the book, for the English edition, Illich states that the thesis he will present in the book “was first formulated in a Spanish document co-authored by Valentina Borremans and myself and submitted as guideline for a meeting of two dozen Chilean socialists and other Latin Americans at CIDOC.” There are many Marxists among those whose influence he recognizes in the formulation of his ideas for the book.

ⁱⁱ **Development:** Three Sachs may symbolize the current situation about the development enterprise. Goldman Sachs, savage capitalism, may represent the dominant attitude in the elite, in governments and international institutions as well as private corporations. Jeffrey Sachs, philanthropic capitalism, represents attempts to take care directly of modernized misery, malaria, aids, civil war victims and other evils of capitalism and democratic despotism...to protect them and the development enterprise. Wolfgang Sachs, beyond development, symbolizes the attitude

of an increasing number of people, all over the world, resisting all forms of development, defending their own ways of life and government and taking new post-development initiatives.

Neoliberalism: While deregulation, privatization, and other policies of the Washington Consensus continue, the main neoliberal orientation –putting social life in the hands of the market- is dead. The World Bank, one of its most ardent promoters, abandoned it in 2007. The Latin American presidents, who were among its most devoted followers, organized the funeral in San Salvador in 2008. In his inaugural discourse, president Obama underlined that only the state could deal with the current economic predicament, and the Prime Minister Brown officially announced the death of neoliberalism in London, in March 2009, after the meeting of the G20. What we now have everywhere are forms of “state capitalism”, the expression used to describe the Soviet tradition and now transformed into a general practice, as a substitute for the neoliberal illusion of a market ruled economy. Of course, if we see neoliberalism as the expression of a new balance of political forces created after people’s defeat when they tried to “assault heaven” in the 1960s, after the most important cultural revolution of the XX century, neoliberalism is still using the previous political structure to impose on the people an outrageous exploitation and continue dismantling what they achieved in the last 200 years of social struggle. But the structure itself is falling apart, as the balance of political forces rapidly changes.

American empire: The US continues to be the most powerful country in the world, in both economic and military terms. Many people, particularly in the left, are still alluding to the American empire, but the weakened hegemonic power of the United States can no longer rule the world (See Wallerstein 2003 and Esteva 2009).

Capitalism: Capitalism is technically dead, at least as we know it. A combination of the structural contradictions determining the “terminal phase” of capitalism, which according to Wallerstein started in 1968 (2005), the irresponsible behavior associated with “market fundamentalism”, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as Soros warned (Esteva 2009), and many other factors, would have determined the end of this regime: it can no longer reproduce itself in the terms defining the capitalist mode of production, as the relation between the owners of the means of productions and the owners of their labor force.

Economic society: As economic activities are being reembedded into society and culture and ethics and politics are coming back to the center of social life, the economic society, in both capitalist and socialist forms, constricted on the premise of scarcity, has already entered into a process that seems to define a long agony.

Modernity and postmodernity: The emerging pluralistic system of reference is not compatible with the modern paradigm, which is no longer valid. The new paradigm emerging from the grassroots implies that we are already beyond both modernity and postmodernity.

Patriarchal mentality. The current crises may be seen as the final collapse of 5,000 years of patriarchal mentality.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Comunalidad* is a neologism coined independently by two indigenous intellectuals of Oaxaca, Mexico, in order to share with others their way of being and thinking, as an active we, a

communal subject defining the first layer of personal identity. Commonality, mixing commons and polity, is not a proper translation but gives an idea of the intention.

^{iv} Illich dedicated many essays, in the last years of his life, to make evident how we were leaving behind the era of tools and entering into the era of systems.

^v The Mexican Carlos Slim competes with Bill Gates to be the richest man on Earth. He is a successful entrepreneur, with many capitalist enterprises, a zombie, and also a vampire, with mines, real state and financial speculation.

^{vi} A political reading takes as its perspective the working class and “self consciously and unilaterally structures its approach to determine the meaning and relevance of *every concept* to the immediate development of working class struggle.” (Cleaver 2001, 30)

^{vii} Insurgent learning is a “new form of learning: a kind of learning nourished by the experiences and sensitivity of old fighters and by new ideas that desecrate the sanctuaries of power.” (Cecena 2012, 113)

Technofasting Illich: Wisdom for Our Age of Techno-tantalizationⁱ

David A. Greenwood

Sir Thomas Crapper's mass-produced technology—the flush toilet—reminds us that our technologies often conceal more than they reveal.

As Madhu Suri Prakash has illustrated, considering technology's wonders—post Hiroshima, post *Silent Spring*, post Katrina, post Frankenfood—ought at least to include notice of the ways technology functions to distract our attention, and even diminish the possibilities for paying attention in important ways.

In *Tools for Conviviality*, Illich wrote:

Counterfoil research must clarify and dramatize the relationship of people to their tools. It ought to hold constantly before the public the resources that are available and the consequences of their use in various ways. It should impress on people the existence of any trend that threatens one of the major balances on which life depends. (Illich, 1973/2000, p. 83)

“Technofasting”—the concept and the challenge—dramatizes questions about the relationship between people and tools. Technofasting goes way back. Well before Illich, the New England prophet, Henry David Thoreau, age 28, said it best: “But lo! men have become the tools of their tools” (Thoreau, 1947, p. 292). Or maybe it was Robert Oppenheimer, father of the A bomb, who in 1945 when the first nuke exploded recalled the *Bhagavad-Gita*: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds” (Oppenheimer cited in Hijiya, 2000, p. 123).

The hunter carried his spear. That I am a tool of my tools--I feel this acutely as I rush off for a conference I am shoehorning, like so much else, into a work/life schedule too scattered and too full for the slower, deeper pace of living and working I yearn for, but somehow remains out of reach. My back is bent to my tools, and they shape me into their likeness. Worldwide, work station illnesses proliferate.

“Lo”--a Middle English word that means “look, see, behold.” As in “lo and behold.” Lo! we have become the tools of our tools.

To say so today against the background of our wired hyper-connectivity is almost trivial in its obviousness. When asked what their father does for a living, my kids respond, “email.” They crave their handheld devices like candy, and huddle with friends like smokers around lit screens. About their father’s occupation—they are merely being observant.

Technofasting: A fast is a cleanse, not a rejection of food. In wisdom traditions, fasting is purification for the sake of improving one’s powers of discernment. It makes eating more enjoyable and healthier; it lowers your blood pressure and aids your digestion. Technofasting is no rejection of technology, but a purge of dependence on select tools for the sake of improving one’s powers of sensory, cognitive, and intuitive discernment. It helps me to recover from overdose and renew other modes of perception. Yet, few of us practice fasting of any kind. It sounds like a good idea, but who has the time or the will? How else might we slow down and unplug enough to examine the relation of people to the tools we take for granted, tools that we may not even recognize as tools, tools that we may have become: *homo technologicus*.

Well before Instagram and other technologies of “real time” connectivity, Thoreau wondered, “Why should we live in such a hurry and waste of life?” (Thoreau, 1947, p. 346). He was mighty suspicious of cultures of speed, of the railroad and the telegraph—mobility and

communications revolutions that prefigure our own. “We do not ride on the railroad;” Thoreau writes, “it rides upon us....If some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune of being ridden upon” (Thoreau, 1947, p. 345). The civilly disobedient argument is not against technology, but for acknowledging its costs to self and others, human and more-than-human. What are the costs? They are uncounted, unaccounted for, and perhaps uncountable. They are on an evolutionary scale. On communications technologies, Thoreau opines:

Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at.... We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. (Thoreau, 1947, pp. 306-307)

What, after all, in our revolving culture of upgrade, productivity, exploitation, speed, and waste, do we have to say to one another? And is anyone ready to listen?

Technofasting is no rejection of technology, but an antidote to its opposite: technotantalization, which numbs and distracts us from considering purposes and discerning outcomes, outcomes such as our own experience and the trajectory of the human race. Let poetry stand in for PowerPoint. In “Song of Myself” Walt Whitman, a contemporary of Thoreau but decidedly a New Yorker of his time, exclaims, “I swear I will never mention love or death inside a house!”ⁱⁱ Houses and shuttered rooms—even these technologies over-restrict the poet’s mad desire for contact--to touch the kosmos and embrace his friends. “Dear Comerado, I confess I have urged you onward with me, and still urge you.” “No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,” the poet writes, “I have no chair.” Whitman continually models a movement away from what constrains,

and toward “the mystical moist” stuff of an enfleshed life in contact with the open air and in the company of friends. What on the Internet substitutes for a touch? Or for eyes openly holding one another? “I am mad for it to be in contact with me” says Whitman. Poets often bring us, through language, image, metaphor and narrative, back to our senses. Poets and other artists offer tools that help us to reset our perception and experience; in this way art offers us an antidote to the prescriptions and constrictions of experience endemic to industrial tools.

The medium is the message. In his poem “How To Be a Poet,” Wendell Berry puts it plainly: “stay away from screens./Stay away from anything/that obscures the place it is in” (Berry, 2015). The screen—what it feeds and what it costs—dominates our attention. It is still early years, and no turning back in the short run. Like with climate change, there are only possibilities for mitigation and adaptation. Technofasting is a form of mitigation. It can create space for a touch more responsive than touchscreens. It can help reveal *how* we pay attention and *what* we pay attention to. It can lift the veil on the costs of our tools. It can help us reacquaint our selves with our selves, and with the place we are in. Technofasting can help us sort out the difference between means and ends and help us choose what tools to embrace for what purpose.

In *Tools for Conviviality* Illich describes two watershed periods in a society’s uptake of tools. The first watershed is where the tool serves a need and shows real potential for solving problems; the second is where the use of the tool becomes counterproductive and part of a radical monopoly that controls how the tool is used. Illich’s conception of tools is of course expansive and inclusive of most industrial institutions. He describes the second watershed as the point at which “the progress demonstrated in a previous achievement is used as a rationale for the exploitation of society as a whole... by an element of society, by one of its self-certifying professional élites” (Illich, 1973/2000, p. 7). Do we, as Illich claimed, continue to expect more

from technologies and less from ourselves and from each other? Wendell Berry replies, “Stay away from screens.”

So many “technologies of the self” surround our existence; the need for a fast seems obvious; the treadmill of production keeps increasing speed. How do we respond to cultures—to our selves—hooked on progress and binging on its glitzy tools? In response, Thoreau, Whitman, Gandhi, Illich, Berry—and many others—suggest a deliberate politics of refusal. Always embedded in this refusal is an embrace of something too precious to give away. Technofasting is likewise a twin act of refusal and embrace; not a step backward to some fake golden age, but forward into what might be still be revealed. It is an experiment one must attempt for oneself.

Can I slow down enough to fast? Am I strong enough to refuse in order to embrace? To open myself to unaccountable experience while I can still sense something else available? Let the poets have the last word. Walt Whitman:

Hurrah for positive science! Long live exact demonstration!
Gentlemen I receive you, and attach and clasp hands with you,
The facts are useful and real . . . they are not my dwelling . . . I enter by them to an
area of the dwelling.
I am less the reminder of property or qualities, and more the reminder of life,
And go to the square for my sake and for other's sake,
And make short account of neuters and geldings, and favor men and women fully
equipped,
And beat the gong of revolt and stop with fugitives and them that plot and conspire.

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ⁱ This paper was part two of a session given at AERA in Philadelphia in 2014 titled "Technofasting Illich: Wisdom for Our Age of Techno-Tantalization." In part one of the session, Madhu Suri Prakash explored the history of the flush toilet, championed in the 19th century by industrialist Sir Thomas Crapper.

ⁱⁱ All citations of Walt Whitman are from the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* accessed September 4, 2014 from <http://www.whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1855/whole.html>.

On The Alert!
Crisis As a Permanent State: How We Get Used To A No-Thing¹

Marianne Gronemeyer

Thomas Aquinas defines "austerity" as a virtue which does not exclude all enjoyments, but only those which are distracting from or destructive of personal relatedness. For Thomas, "austerity" is a complementary part of a more embracing virtue, which he calls friendship or joyfulness. It is the fruit of an apprehension that things or tools could destroy rather than enhance *eutrapelia* (or graceful playfulness) in personal relations. (Hugo v. Rahner, *Man at Play*, New York, 1972.)

We have invited you to this meeting hoping this virtue that can foster personal relations may be with us, even though our invitation is not really inviting. We have faced you with a cascade of words that are able to frighten us, any single one of them but particularly so in their combination. It's hard to know which of them is the most threatening and disquieting. The most intrusive and aggressive one maybe the word *alarm*. "Alarm" signals immediately threatening danger and does not only call for ultimate vigilance but also urges people to act promptly if they are able to confront the danger, or to flee instantaneously if they are not. "Alarm" reminds me irresistibly of screaming sirens, announcing the next air raid towards Hamburg. And even now I can't hear the sound of sirens without that feeling of panic coming back.

¹ This paper was originally presented at a symposium on October 2-3, 2014 at Frankfurt am Main. The organizer, "Stiftung Convivial," is a foundation located in Wiesbaden and committed to promoting thinking after and with Ivan Illich. See <http://www.convivial.de/illich.html>) The conference theme: "Alarmbereitschaft. Krise als Dauerzustand, Gewöhnung an ein Unding." (Being on the alert: Crisis as a permanent state - Getting used to a No-Thing).

In the *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen* I read: Alarm m. *Warnsignal bei Gefahr* (warning signal in the case of danger); *Zustand der Gefahr* (state of danger); *Beunruhigung* (agitation); *Bereitschaft* (readiness). *Lärm* (noise) is a derivative of “alarm.” “Alarm” itself derives from the Italian , *all arme*, the command that called the soldiers to arms.

Many meanings and even contradictory connotations flow together in this term: flight and attack, danger, worry and disturbance, horror and being headless, watchfulness and being on the alert, tenseness of nerves and withheld breath, but above all: scarcity of time. That is to say, no time to keep cool and composed or to practice calm consideration.

But the subject of our symposium is “being on the alert” and that means two different things. The first meaning—you have to be prepared for an alarm at any time because the circumstances of your existence have become shaky, unstable, no longer trustworthy and can fall to pieces out of the blue. On the other hand “on the alert” means that as soon as you hear the warning signals, you have instantly to give up any other pursuit whatsoever and follow the sirens without even knowing why and where to go. Both kinds of readiness create an untenable situation in the strict sense of the word. Both create a situation that cannot be prolonged. One can be alarmed only for a very short time. After that he must calm down, or wait, or either do something or let the announced catastrophe happen, while endeavouring to establish a kind of everyday life within completely changed or even destructed circumstances afterwards.

“Alarm” is supposed to prevent the worst and to save lives. Everybody is urged “to save his soul.” “Alarm” isn’t the catastrophe itself, it’s the prelude to the catastrophe—which then either occurs or can be prevented by coordinated efforts. Alternatively, the catastrophe does not happen at all which turns the alarm into a false

alarm. Too, those who are able to raise the alarm are very powerful, possessing also the ability to misuse the alarm. When people are frightened or scared, they will be ready to accept any offer of rescue whatsoever.

“Alarm,” particularly when furnished with an exclamation mark, may be the most noticeable term in our headline, but the most important one is “crisis.” I am sure that nobody in this room, when asked to define “*the crisis*” in a plausible way, could give a conclusive answer. As understood today “crisis” is a non-thing, a no-thing, a non-sense, which is able to upset us, but cannot be experienced as real.

In his early writings, for instance in *Tools for Conviviality*, in *The Right to Useful Unemployment* or in *Disabling Professions*, Ivan Illich was very concerned with the crisis to come. Later on the term is no longer found in his texts *expressis verbis*. I think that is due to the fact that he could no longer believe in the coming of the crisis. Belief in the crisis? This seems to be a strange way of putting it. As if a change to the better could be hoped for from a worldwide crisis. And that’s exactly what Illich did in the seventies even though he was sufficiently skeptical. Illich wrote,

“It would be pretentious to predict if this age, when needs were shaped by professional design, will be remembered with a smile or with a curse. I do, of course, hope that it will be remembered as the night, when father went on a binge, dissipated the family fortune and obligated the children to start anew.”²

Ivan Illich understood crisis in the traditional Greek sense as a turning point in a situation that has become untenable, in other words, he understood crisis as the point at which something settles itself rather than that it has to be settled by activity.

² Ivan Illich: *Disabling Professions*, London 1977, p. 13.

In the course of a serious disease the crisis is the critical situation, when the disease turns either to life or to death, when the organism is defeated or able to overcome. And it might be true that hope has an important influence on this decision, though not an influence that can be counted on.

I think all of us are familiar with this ambivalent sense of the meaning of crisis—that it can bear life and death. Likely we would have answered in this sense to the question, what the word “crisis” means. But this knowledge doesn’t really help. “Crisis,” as it is used in present everyday language, has lost its ambiguity. Crisis is nothing that can be hoped for. On the contrary, crisis must be conquered using all available means. Crisis is not at all noticeably present in time and space. It’s somewhat cryptic yet lasting. I could even say: the crisis doesn’t exist, there is only the rumour of the crisis. But that doesn’t allow us to be happy. Instead of the crisis we have to deal with a lingering catastrophe that has been systematically deprived of its potential to become a crisis. While we, on the one hand, can no longer believe in the crisis, we are on the other hand tempted to believe in the rumours of the crisis. These two differing beliefs demonstrate two different bases—belief grounded in hope or in purchasing power.

Today, powerful interests hide themselves behind the rumours of crisis. Listening to the relevant parts of Illich’s early texts, we get an idea of how he understood the phenomenon of crisis, what he hoped for, and what was for him terrifying with respect to the crisis. In the light of this understanding, which was still possible in the seventies we may get an idea of to what degree of refinement the mystification of the crisis has been developed so that today without any irritation the non-sense (non-thing) of a permanent crisis is taken for real. We have gotten used to

this condition of permanent crisis, being ready to believe that the non-sense makes sense and the no-thing does exist in reality. Illich wrote,

“The symptoms of accelerated crisis are widely recognized. Multiple attempts have been made to explain them. I believe that this crisis is rooted in a major twofold experiment that has failed, and I claim that the resolution of the crisis begins with a recognition of the failure. For a hundred years we have tried to make machines work for men and to school men for life in their service. Now it turns out that machines do not "work" and that people cannot be schooled for a life at the service of machines. The hypothesis on which the experiment was built must now be discarded. The hypothesis was that machines can replace slaves. The evidence shows that, used for this purpose, machines enslave men.”³

The project to replace men with robots is at the core of the crisis. More precisely and at present the modern crisis cannot be described. Nevertheless it is impressive, from our point of view, how determined Ivan Illich was to predict a very near breakdown of this hybrid project. The evidence of the failure of the industrial mode of production and consumption seemed irrefutable to him. And he was hopeful that this insight might completely change the relationship between people and their tools with the consequence that convivial instead of destructive tools would be created. Illich wrote,

³ Ivan Illich: Tools for conviviality, Great Britain 1975 (Fontana) p. 23.

“People need new tools to work with rather than tools that ‘work’ for them. The technology to make the most of their energy and imagination each has, rather than more well-programmed energy slaves.”⁴

But Illich was always aware of the ambiguity of the crisis. He never forgot that the crisis had two exits, one leading to life, the other to death. He wasn’t an optimist, but he was hopeful. He hoped for a radical change and he was confident that the industrial system, being not only counterproductive, but also destructive, could be overcome. On the dark side of the crisis he saw two possibilities. Namely that the situation, being untenable, might explode in an unbounded and incurable break down, one that couldn’t be survived. Ivan didn’t speak about this disastrous possibility, because it surmounts our imagination. He refused to participate in modern *catastrophily* while adopting the stance that one can only be silent when words and imagination fail. And that’s what he did in participating in those silent groups that expressed silently a “No without any Yes” to genocide-machines in the early eighties. The only attitude that seems imaginable towards this all-destructive possibility is to mobilize the utmost in order to impede and slow down its progress. Günther Anders speaks of an only limited space of time remaining, which makes it impossible for us to think of history as a succession of epochs any longer. This desperate contradiction between the necessity to impede and the necessity to force the crisis characterizes our situation and this is just the operation site for those experts who administer the crisis in order to guarantee its permanence.

The other way to manage the crisis without undergoing a radical change is that “technocratic caretakers (could) be mandated to set limits on growth in every

⁴ Ibidem

dimension, and to set them just at the point beyond which further production would mean utter destruction. Such a *kakotopia* could maintain the industrial age at the highest endurable level of output, (but hardly human beings). Man would live in a plastic bubble that would protect his survival while rendering it increasingly worthless. Since man's tolerance would become the most serious limitation to growth, the alchemist's endeavour would be renewed in the attempt to produce a monstrous type of man fit to live among reason's dreams. A major function of engineering would become the psychogenetic tooling of man himself as a condition for further growth.”⁵

But even this horrible vision, didn't discourage Illich's hope that the installation of this managerial fascism could be evaded. This confidence left him later, however, when he had to recognize that in industrial societies exactly this monstrous way had been chosen— against all insight into the apparent counterproductivity and destructiveness of industrialism and further industrial growth.

A diabolic paradox has been forced on people. Everybody knows that we cannot proceed in the way that we have; everybody knows that school is a kind of hell, producing manifold suffering and obstructing manifold useful capabilities and talents. Everybody knows that the health care system is not only a danger to health and wellbeing, but also no longer affordable. Everybody knows that the traffic has become a kind of raving standstill. But those who experience all this day by day, nevertheless call for more of the same instead of demanding radical change. This paradox makes the absurdity of a “crisis in permanence” possible. We can see now that the most threatening word of our theme is neither “alarm” nor “crisis” but “permanence.” Those who suffer from the ever-growing speed of our everyday life may perceive everything that lasts, that is constant or permanent as soothing and

⁵ Ibidem, pp. 115-116

reassuring. But from the standpoint of Dantes' Hell the never-ending, the continuation in permanence means infinite horror. From our point of view it means the perpetual continuation of the project to replace man by machinery (the apparatus) and finally to change man himself into a perfect apparatus. (*Vom Menschenersatz zum Ersatzmenschen*).

We must ask ourselves, why this monstrous project cannot be abandoned with a "No without any Yes" by those who function as its raw material? Why don't they provoke a crisis that deserves this name? Why don't they think of ways to master their existence without undermining the conditions of their being in the world as humans? Why hasn't the outbreak of the crisis, that Ivan Illich believed so near, been domesticated and turned round in a way that its power died out?

Powerful monopolies have joined together, multiplying their forces immensely in an aggregate global monopoly with the intention to install and control a monoculture of thinking. They are the driving forces that guarantee worldwide "progress" and "development": the natural sciences, the economy, the technology and bureaucracy. Their destructive forces evolve from the fact that they hold a monopoly in their respective fields of operation. Science demands the monopoly, to interpret and explain the world; the economy claims the monopoly of world distribution; technology holds the monopoly to produce the world as a man-made second nature to be consumed; and bureaucracy monopolizes the ruling and organisation of the world. As an interconnected system they build a superpower which has already carried through its claim to global dominance. It tends to include everything into its dominion, to make everything part of itself. It doesn't tolerate other gods. "You shall consent to my knowledge and trust my evidence," says science. "You shall be willing to defeat your neighbour," says economy. "Let the apparatus work instead of you. Be

serviced and cared for,” says technology. “That will have its price however,” remarks economy. Above all you mustn’t disturb, says bureaucracy.

The power to destroy the cultural and material heritage that has been accumulated in this system is unimaginable and annihilating, so that every means seems justified to suppress its outbreak as long as possible. However, as the four modern apocalyptic riders have decreed a monoculture of thinking, there is in fact only one means to attain at least a postponement: the continuation of the same with ever refined means. The propaganda is focussed on the non-existence of alternatives. “We have no choice!” goes the well known statement—a declaration of political bankruptcy. The “crisis” is conquered with exactly those means that have led to it, by just the system that can survive only in the shadow of a permanent crisis. Within this kind of management of the crisis there are however many means accepted to let the crisis smoulder without arousing the fire, and fuel anxieties while at the same time appeasing them.

“All that is worrying and alarming us is settled in the future,” the French sociologist Luc Boltanski states. He continues,

“It is not yet known, at least not exactly. Therefore support is needed from experts, computer centres, prognosis specialists to understand the coming change, that we will inevitably have to undergo, but not before later. We must agree to this unavoidable mutation, because the forces pushing the world towards this change are inexorable. There is no other way. And as those who bear the ‘responsibility’ for the future, we must try to make the best of them.”⁶

⁶ Luc Boltanski: Individualismus und Freiheit, in: WestEnd, 5. Jg. Heft 2 2008 S. 145 (Translation M.G.)

In anticipatory obedience we shall adapt ourselves to what is irrevocably coming and we are to welcome this adaptation as our freedom and to take our responsibility seriously. This is, says Boltansky, the logic of the limbo—which is a kind of “big waiting room, however without any prospect of being permitted to leave this room one day.” Is there, Boltanski asks, a term more adequate to characterize at least metaphorically our situation than the term “limbo”? Though it is not particularly uncomfortable, limbo is a place dominated by an immense tristesse.”⁷

Another strategy to maintain the state of arousal and to produce general agreement on more and more preventive measures, more and more safety regulations, and more and more surveillance, is to divide the general crisis of the industrial system into many different sub-crises that cannot be identified as arising from the same origin. These appear as independent trouble spots *within* the system and distract the attention from the crisis *of* the system. The case by case combat requires ever more restrictions of freedom, ever more industrial growth, needs more and more bureaucratic management and ever exclusive knowledge of experts.

In this way we get used to the ideology of “Alternatives not available!” and to the crisis as permanent state. It is as fatal to succumb to this ideology, as to believe lightheadedly that we could manage a change to the better by all sorts of corrections, concerning this or that, by alternative projects, models and institutions to save the world. But without the belief in what Rudolf Schottlaender calls the “*Auchanderskönnen*,” (the capacity to choose a completely different way) the catastrophe cannot be transformed into a crisis. Catastrophes can only be canalized into a crisis when people are able to see new goals and perspectives, says Illich. The crisis of the industrial system can be canalized only when people recognize the

⁷ Rolf Schieder: In der Vorhölle, in: Luc Boltanski: Die Vorhölle, Berlin 2011 S. 130f.

practicability of autonomous and convivial ways of production. The contribution of Ivan Illich consists in his having given a voice to the “*Auchanderskönnen*” even after he distanced himself from the too hopeful views of the early seventies. Given the global domination of the apocalyptic four, the direction of resistance has to change radically. Not within the system can we practice variants of the “*Auchanderskönnen*,” but only outside the system. The distinction between inside and outside, which has nearly disappeared, becomes crucial—a question of our viability as human beings. Only as system-absconders or system-deserters we can hope to get a foreshadowing of the radically other (*Auchanderskönnen*).

In 1977 Ivan Illich wrote:

“Crisis now means that moment when doctors, diplomats, bankers and assorted social engineers take over and liberties are suspended. ... ‘Crisis,’ the Greek term for ‘choice’ or ‘turning point’ in all modern languages now means ‘driver, step on the gas. Crisis now means an ominous but tractable threat against which money, manpower and management can be rallied. ... But the term ‘crisis’ need not have this meaning. It need not imply any headlong rush for the escalation of management. Instead it can mean the instant of choice, the marvellous moment, when people become suddenly aware of their self-imposed cages and of the possibility of a different life.”⁸

Frankfurt Naxos 2014 Übersetzung

⁸ Ivan Illich: Equity in Useful Unemployment and its Professional Enemies, Cuernavaca 1977 (Tecno-Politica)

Todd Hartch, The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the Modern West, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0190204563

Reviewed by Gustavo Esteva

How does the historian complete his history? Does he begin with a conclusion, a hunch, and proceed to collect evidence to support it? Or does he begin with evidence and critically read it to arrive at some provisional conclusion? Reading *The Prophet*, I suspect the former although I had hoped for the latter. What might have been an effort to bring to light Illich's critique of the modern West, instead appears as an inquisitorial search to collect 'proofs' of an inexistent crime for which the innocent defendant has been already condemned.

Perhaps, because Illich has been so important to me—as activist and author—that I respond as strongly as I do to conclusions I see as wrong. Or perhaps my response is understandable in that I see the implications for such erroneous conclusions to be a dismissal of a critique so necessary to our moment in history. Perhaps, neither of these. Ivan was my friend and perhaps I wish to set the record straight about his actions, as I observed and experienced them as one who knew him in the flesh.

Regardless, I return to my problems with Hartch's conclusions with the hope of demonstrating a fundamentally different interpretation of the "facts." Consulting archives, including those of the FBI file "Ivan Illich," the Archdiocese of Mexico City and several personal collections, Hartch opts for a very judgmental and dismissive picture of a man rather than an exploration of the ideas and deeds and the historical context that informed one of the 20th century's most radical social critics.

Hartch's judgment includes a very "objective" characterization of his subject: "full time controversialist"; "cruel, proud, arrogant"; "hyperbolic"; "vitriolic"; "bombastic rethoric"; "lack of lucidity"...and many more adjectives of this kind. "Illich's ideas demand a certain amount of attention" (130), Hatch writes. Yes, the ideas of one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century, currently discussed all around the world, deserves "certain" attention!

In spite of the amazing documentation Hartch exhibits, he commits several factual mistakes. Two errors are particularly worth noting:

(1) "He kept a house in Cuernavaca for many years, traveled around the world to give seminars, and eventually settled down among a group of his friends in Bremen, Germany, where he died in 2002."

Ivan kept his house in Ocotepc, Mexico until the end of his life. He spent in it more time than in any other place of the world since he settled down there. Every year, for many years, he came back to his home, for several months, after spending some time in State College, Pennsylvania, and in Bremen, Germany, where he died—when he had his luggage ready to fly to his home, in Ocotepc, for the Christmas season of 2002. In other words, Illich never "settled down" in Bremen, Germany. Neither did he "keep a house" in Cuernavaca. Rather, his home was Ocotepc, Cuernavaca, Mexico.

(2) "Centro Intercultural de Documentación ... founded in 1963 as part of CIF..."
(xi); "In light of later statements by Illich that his center was a completely secular

organization, it is important to note that, in the very first organizational meeting of the CIF, the new center was clearly characterized as a response to the American bishops' encouragement to promote the training of missionaries for Latin America." (32); "As CIF evolved into the more secular CIDOC..."(66); "... a second "center" with a new and less religious name, the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (74); "Despite the change of venue and the more secular emphasis..." (113).

This interpretation of Hartch regarding the origins of both CIF and CIDOC is indeed a serious matter, revealing both his strategy and method. For him Illich created CIF as a religious organization and slowly secularized it, for his perverse and hidden purposes...and thus lied when he said that his center was a secular organization.

A correction of Hartch's flawed history is necessary. The Center for Intercultural Formation (CIF) was incorporated in the US on March 3, 1961, sponsored by Fordham University and several religious institutions. The Centro de Investigaciones Culturales, A.C. (CIC) was created in Cuernavaca and can be seen as an extension of CIF. But CIDOC is an entirely different story. It was never part of CIF or its creature. It was created on 25 October 1965 by José María Sbert Callao, Tarcisio Ocampo Villaseñor and Guillermo Floris Margadant, with a legal shape (asociación civil) that in the Mexican legislation offers the greatest secular autonomy (based in a 1888 law for liberal professions). None of the founders of CIDOC represented or was associated with any church or religious activities. CIDOC, as Illich stated, was a completely secular organization. It was not another CIF or an extension of CIF: it was conceived and

implemented as a radical departure from CIF. And it is indeed mysterious why Hartch considers the name Center for Intercultural Formation more religious than the name Centro Intercultural de Documentación. (It is mysterious...unless one suspects that the observation is a trick, part of a method, a strategy).

Several additional errors exist in Hartch's history. But, instead of including more examples of Hartch's factual mistakes, it is useful to examine a kind of personal obsession his historical analysis demonstrates. As I see it, Hartch is making a case—all incorrect—for three things:

1. That Illich disobeyed all his ecclesiastic superiors, including three popes;
2. That he was against the very existence of missionaries, and
3. That the life and work of Illich, since the early 1960s to the end of his life, was a conspiratorial plot against the Catholic church; his writings about education, health or transportation would thus be mere pretexts and ways to cover up his attacks against his real "enemy," the Church.

As I have said, Hartch seems to have created a tribunal (Hartch), to deal with a crime he invented (the preceding three "charges"), and the book is the material collected by the prosecutor (Hartch), and used as a proof by the judge (Hartch) to pronounce his sentence, condemning the criminal. Since it is impossible to demonstrate anything about the inexistent crime, Hartch produces instead a literary piece in which he carefully constructs the crime and the criminal with very subjective, biased and speculative opinions, buried in a mountain of quotes (carefully selected to "prove" his points), factoids, and superficial reviews of Illich's texts while including a few real facts.

Some friends of Ivan, who have refused to review the Hartch book, seriously suspect a plot. Hartch does not look stupid, ignorant or mentally “challenged.” So, if he is so mistaken, they assume, it should be because he is at the service of some obscure interests—in the hierarchy of the Church and/or the American government, or the many headed capitalist hydra—who wants “to pull the teeth out” of Ivan's critique and then use him to pretty up the status quo. In Hartch's book, Ivan evolves from being the wrong man in the wrong place to being a “saboteur of the Church's missions.”

No, I don't believe in any conspiracy theory currently speculated among a few of Ivan's friends, though I understand these as one among several possible reactions against Hartch's book. Such a distortion of the real story cannot but generate anger and suspicion. To the “charges” leveled against Illich by Hartch, I respond.

First, Illich did not disobey his superiors. When the situation came to a conflictive dead-end, he opted for a renunciation of his rights and privileges in order to avoid disobedience and to protect his Church. Only his amazing talent and courage allowed him to do what he did, without losing his dignity and self-respect, but at an enormous price, with a lot of personal suffering. Hartch's quotes, factoids and facts can be used to make this point evident, if we handle them without the biased interpretation and de-contextualization of Hartch. There are many other elements, including believable testimonies, to clarify this point.

To set the record straight, I've included fragments of a document¹. Not an opinion, a testimony, a speculation; a document. When Ivan came back to Cuernavaca, after the trial in Rome, he wrote to the Bishop of Cuernavaca Méndez Arceo on June 24,

¹ Please see http://www.contralinea.com.mx/c10/html/8columnas/ene03_herejes.html Accessed on July 3, 2015.

1968 asking him to cancel his ministerial licenses. “I want to offer a proof, once again, of my complete submission to the ecclesiastic magisterium, submission that became more absolute and radical during the last three days in Rome. I am, and, with God’s help, I will always be willing to sign any public retraction that is asked from me, founded in some authentic expressions of mine, and my superiors judge that could remedy any damage caused by any imprudent or erroneous expression.” On September 6 the Archbishop of New York authorized him to live like a layman.

On January 14, 1969 Illich sent to Méndez Arceo his resignation from the Church. He wrote, among other things: “...In these last months and years my love towards the Holy Roman Church became more tender and deep... Help me to offer testimony of these attitudes. Of my absolute and rigorous submission to doctrinal authorities...with all their limitations, weaknesses and anachronisms that could characterize them. Of my love for the Church as she is, because in her historical appearances I recognize the only presence properly sacramental of God among us. Of my acceptance of the canonic laws of the Roman Church. It is my wish to contribute to a deep renovation of the Holy Church.” These words of Illich clearly and conclusively show his absolute obedience and commitment to the Church that he loved.

Second, Illich was never against missionaries, as such, or against the mission of the Church. As Cayley’s review states, this is “a very open and shut case.” A careful reader of Hartch’s book may discover this. However, and in spite of Hartch’s confusion, he seems to know this and he presents many quotes, facts and factoids that are solid proof of Ivan’s real struggle, which Ivan himself described, as Cayley reminds us, as a struggle against “an obvious, easily understandable caricature, as a corruption of the mission

given by Jesus to his apostles.” What Illich did was something that can be called “damage control”: he gave many priests and nuns a kind of enlightenment that allowed them to reconsider their position about the “mission” or to do it in a less damaging way.

And this is a very important distinction. When Ivan became the man he was, after the moral epiphany he experienced his first night in New York (described by Hartch), he became committed to intercultural dialogue, the kind of dialogue that the West and particularly the Church have been unable to practice. Yes, Ivan loved the Franciscan fathers coming to the New Spain, but he knew that to call their encounters with the Aztecs in 1524 “the first intercultural dialogue in history” was a very serious distortion of the facts and the very idea of the dialogue. Such an encounter was not a dialogue but a caricature, a clear imposition of both truth and culture by one of the parties (against another). “Interculturality,” that no-man’s land, was at the very center of Ivan’s life and work, and is a contribution toward understanding his position and struggle regarding the American missionaries who were reducing the mission to a program, and a very aggressive program, as an expression of the development enterprise, ignoring the very idea of an intercultural dialogue.

Third, Illich was a deep believer, until the end of his life, and remained a priest – cultivating in his heart all the devotion and commitment that many people acknowledged and admired when he was practicing as a priest. Until the end of his life, he remained loyal to his beloved Church—church as a “she,” as he often said, criticizing it as an “it,” an institution. In condemning Illich, however, Hartch practices a peculiar inversion of his work. It is not, as he writes, that Illich’s critiques of modern institutions were just the smoke screen to hide his critique of the Church. It is precisely the other way around.

In his studies to become a priest, the discipline Illich liked the most was ecclesiology. Illich knew very well the nature and history of the Catholic Church. For him, the Parable of the Good Samaritan was a very good illustration of the main message of Christ: love to the other. In his very open critique to his beloved Church, Ivan began to use the famous dictum: *corruption optimi quae est pessima*. For him, the best, Christ's message, was corrupted by the institutional Church, producing services which are, in the words of Ivan's friend, John Mcknight, the mask of love. Illich was hiding nothing, for there was nothing to hide. There existed neither plot nor conspiracy. Rather, Ivan observed with historical perspective, that all modern institutions were constructed on the model of the Church, and then he applied his critique of the Church to all those institutions and so on and so forth. This is the opposite of what Hartch describes.

In his condemnation of Illich, Hartch appears as a defender of the Church he adopted. Yet, perhaps he is still unable to fully understand that Church and the meaning of allegiance to it. The notion of obedience to the hierarchy is not the same among Catholics as it is among evangelical Protestants. There is a great difference between literal obedience and substantive obedience (for example in connection with the Bible).

In the end, perhaps those friends of Ivan are entirely wrong in their supposition of a conspiracy against Illich. Rather, Hartch is likely a well-intentioned though mistaken historian. But as Ivan said, in the long quote with which Hartch starts his dark novel: "to hell with good intentions."²

San Pablo Etla, June 2015

² Please see "To Hell With Good Intentions" by Ivan Illich. Accessed on July 15, 2015 at http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm.

Leonard J. Waks, *Education 2.0: The Learningweb Revolution and the Transformation of the School*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2013. 256 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1612050362

Reviewed by Maylan Dunn-Kenney

Is Another World Possible?

“The contemporary ideal is a pan-hygienic world: a world in which all contacts between men [sic], and between men and their world, are the result of foresight and manipulation. School has become the planned process which tools man for a planned world, the principal tool to trap man in man’s trap.” (Illich, 1970, p. 110)

Leonard J. Waks recognizes Ivan Illich as a primary influence in his opening acknowledgements, but never mentions him again or cites any of his work. While this is disappointing, it is true that Illich’s presence can be felt throughout the book and there is little doubt that Waks is drawing from his association with Illich at Pennsylvania State University if not from specific texts. In fact, a reader familiar with Illich’s ideas will find plenty to think about. What would Illich think of Waks’s networked learning center proposal? As technology affords more and more people opportunities for self-organized learning, is it possible to step outside the hierarchy and control of compulsory schooling *en masse* while still retaining the financial resources provided to public schools? Is it possible to leverage the freedom of the internet without falling into “man’s trap”?

Waks carefully builds a case that we can. The book is organized into four parts: The first includes a description of the industrial model of schooling and its failures; the second part includes description and critique of learning networks as they already exist in and out of schools;

the third part includes the introduction to a new network paradigm of education; and the fourth part includes suggestions for how to move toward the new paradigm as well as examples of how the process is already underway. Each chapter of each section is extensively footnoted and an appendix provides a comprehensive list of the most useful sources.

Beginning with the premise that the purpose of education is to mentor young people into adult society, Waks identifies the success of the industrial school as its function in establishing the norms of independence, individual achievement, and the reduction of all people to their institutional functions (an assertion strongly reminiscent of Illich's 1970 critique in *Deschooling Society*). He writes that, "Schools thus can be said to prepare young people for life in society by habituation in an impersonal normative order that replaces the close personal order of families and neighborhood ethnic communities." (Waks, 2014, p. 40)

Waks then makes a powerful case for the failure of the current "factory model" of education, both academically and in terms of social relevance, as the usefulness of its norms begins to fade in an economy that is more globalized and favors temporary contractual employment. He also argues that accountability reform measures *cannot* fundamentally remedy schools' problems but can only make them worse by rigidly enforcing professional mystique in an entrepreneurial environment.

To assist the reader in envisioning a new educational paradigm, Waks attempts to separate cognitive or academic education from socialization. He argues that the factory school is very inefficient and fundamentally ineffective in addressing cognitive and academic goals, while outdated in providing for children's socialization. He then suggests that the cognitive and socializing aspects of education should be separated in the new paradigm, with new institutions

providing “socialization and articulation” for the open networked learning, or “roam schooling,” that most young people will manage on their own or with non-compulsory mentoring.

Waks does a great job of demonstrating how the internet has already begun to break down “professionalism” and flatten hierarchies. He provides dozens of examples of young people bypassing conventional career trajectories to achieve success on their own terms, or adhering to conventional schooling expectations to arrive at a dead end in debt. Even more intriguing are the numerous examples of educational organizations that have abandoned the factory model and serve as examples of innovation.

Still, the thoughtful reader will find many questions to ponder. After decades of fully institutionalized life in the United States, how will families and communities who have been systematically undermined and are now under economic duress take on a broader role in the education and socialization of children? (Even in the examples provided by Waks, parents were often stunned and surprised by their children’s accomplishments in the virtual world.) Would the separation of the “cognitive” from “socialization and articulation” contribute to the unfortunate “hyper-rationalization” that has already become pervasive in society? Will we find even more examples of young people connected on the internet but alienated from life? Can the hierarchical allocation of social position (a consistent “success” of schooling) truly be undermined by Education 2.0? Or is this just a move from control to seduction? (Szabo, 2014) Put another way, if the internet and social media are turned increasingly toward the purpose of education and socialization, how will ordinary people retain unencumbered access to the powerful knowledge commons it represents? (Bollier, 2014) Ultimately, Illichians will understand Wak’s Education 2.0 as either an attempt to salvage a destructive institution and make it more palatable, or as a new invention altogether that will challenge the hegemony of education as we know it today.

While Waks emphasizes the innovative aspects of Education 2.0, he hopes to repurpose educational and social service funding for “socialization and articulation” institutions. Funding seldom comes without strings attached, making these institutions vulnerable to corruption by the professional class on behalf of elites. So, the internet and social media may have great educational potential and help a number of remarkable young people “by-pass” traditional education, as Waks aptly demonstrates. However, the “socialization and articulation” institutions that Waks feels would be necessary for *most* young people are a worrisome attempt to short-cut the painstaking work of actually rebuilding a culture that supports and encourages the young.

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Todd Hartch, The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the Modern West, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0190204563

Reviewed by David Cayley

In 1999, near the end of his life, I asked Ivan Illich how he would square the injunction which ends the Gospel of Matthew to “make disciples of all nations” with his opposition to the missionary activity of the American Catholic Church in the 1960’s. The interview was being done for the radio arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and we both knew, as Illich remarked a little later in this conversation, that we were engaged in what he called “a shadow battle on radio.” Accordingly, he let me have it. “I reject your imputation,” he said, “that in the 1960’s I took a stand against the missionary activities of the Church.” “Those were the days,” he goes on to say, “when an American manipulator, journalist and priest, who had glorified the missionary activities of the American Maryknoll Fathers in China, found a new vocation for this Catholic missionary order by inveigling Pope John XXIII into signing a document in which he asks North American bishops and religious superiors to send 10 percent of their ordained, trained priests to South America, the new mission field of the Church. This man also wrote a paper, which he then had signed by the Vatican authorities, creating, as a parallel to the secular Peace Corps, an agency called Papal Volunteers for Latin America. And I denounced this as an obvious, easily understandable caricature, as a corruption of the mission given by Jesus to his apostles.”

This sounds like a pretty open and shut case, but readers of Todd Hartch’s just published The Prophet of Cuernavaca will soon discover a more tangled tale. In 1961

Illich and several colleagues set up the Center of Intercultural Formation (CIF), in Cuernavaca, Mexico, with the announced purpose of training missionaries to Latin America. (CIF later gave birth to the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC), a less church-centered organization which, for a time, operated in parallel with CIF and then displaced it.) This was a continuation of work Illich had begun in Puerto Rico some years before when he founded and directed the Institute for Intercultural Communication, which had trained New Yorkers who were working with Puerto Rican immigrants. Here, Hartch reports, “hundreds of priests and nuns and some teachers, firefighters, police officers” were introduced to the Spanish language and the rudiments of Puerto Rican culture. John Considine, the Maryknoll priest about whom Illich spoke to me, was a key figure in the launching of CIF. Considine was then the director of the Latin American Bureau (LAB) of the Catholic Welfare Conference, and his concern was the implementation of the missionary plan for which he had gained the support of the Pope. Illich’s work in Puerto Rico had given Considine a high regard for Illich’s abilities, and he had insisted that Illich was by far the best man to direct the training of these new missionaries, even when Paul Tanner, the general secretary of the association of American bishops, had argued with him that Illich was too much of a wild card to be trusted in such a position. As the director of the LAB, Considine was crucial to the flow both of both funds and students to the new center, and he served on its board of directors. Without him, it’s unlikely, on Hartch’s evidence, that CIF would ever have got off the ground.

Illich maintained cordial working relations with Considine for a number of years. In a letter written to Considine in 1963 he acknowledges “frequent differences in

opinion” but then goes on to say that these had only “strengthened rather than weakened our mutual respect.” So, if Illich from the start had regarded the missionary initiatives for which Considine had won the Pope’s backing as “an easily understandable caricature” of the Gospel imperative to spread the good news, then it’s hard to avoid the conclusion that the main manipulator in this story was Illich and not the earnest and somewhat credulous Considine. But perhaps it’s the case that Illich turned against the missionary effort in Latin America more gradually than he allowed in his summary recollection to me nearly forty years later? Todd Hatch does not think so. He quotes a remark Illich made in connection with his years in Puerto Rico before ever establishing CIF. “I learned in Puerto Rico,” Illich recalled, “that there are only a few people who are not stunted or wholly destroyed by lifelong work ‘for the poor’ in a foreign country.” And Hartch thinks that this impression was fortified during a 3,000 miles journey that Illich made over a four-month period in 1960, winding his way from Santiago, Chile to Caracas, Venezuela. Hartch calls it a pilgrimage; it was certainly a voyage of discovery. Illich was impressed by Latin American folk Catholicism but repelled by the American missionaries he encountered. “Remarks by Illich,” Hartch writes, “implied that the missionaries he met during this time conceived of their role as making the Latin American Church look more like the Church in the United States, saving Latin America from communism and building costly schools and church buildings. Illich was so angered by these Americans that in 1960, probably on this trip, he told Bishop Manuel Larrain, president of the Latin American bishops’ organization that he was ‘prepared if necessary to stop the coming of the missionaries to Latin America.’” What one can certainly say, it seems to me, is that Illich, from the beginning, believed that mission must

be a vocation and not a programme with a target or a diversion of ecclesiastical personnel to an underserved area. Accordingly it's hard not to share Hartch's conclusion that, at the least, Illich's relation with Considine involved a certain amount of "ambiguity, flattery and misdirection."

I begin with this vignette because I think it illustrates the value of Todd Hartch's book for those of us who know something of the legend of Illich's CIDOC years but not much of the historical record. And Hatch discovered an extensive record deposited in archives at Harvard, Notre Dame, Indiana, Fordham and the Catholic University of America. Drawing on letters, periodical literature, the recollections of teachers and students, and the many publications of CIF/CIDOC, as well as Illich's own writings, Hartch has pieced together the story of Illich's Cuernavaca years, beginning with the establishment of CIF in 1961 and ending with the closing of CIDOC in 1976. Particular attention is given to what Hartch calls "the Catholic period" from 1961 to 1967. He also provides a biographical sketch of Illich in the years before 1961, and concludes with an assessment of Illich's work as a whole, but the greater part of the book is taken up with the goings on at CIF/CIDOC and with the question of mission.

Before he ever started CIF, Illich had developed a philosophy of mission. The best introduction to it is a book called The Church, Change and Development which includes several substantial statements of Illich's views. The qualities that Illich urges missionaries to cultivate are humility, poverty of spirit, and silence in the face of all that they do not know and may never understand. Missionaries may know the Gospel, but they can have no idea initially what it means in the new context they have entered, and, in that sense, they enter empty-handed. He also urges the need for some formation in the

sociology of religion, an education he himself had undergone in the 1950's through writers like Will Herberg, Martin Marty and others who had shown that much of what passes for Christianity is no more than cultural accretion and the sanctification of civic piety. Such an education was particularly necessary for Americans, he thought, because the power and influence of the United States made it easier for them to confuse the Gospel with the particular form of their church and therefore to become what he calls "ecclesiastic conquistadors."

So Illich certainly began his work at CIF with the view that many, perhaps most of the Americans who were apt to end up in Latin America under a plan like Considine's would likely do more harm than good unless they underwent drastic reorientation. This was reflected in the CIF training courses. In the very first session, Hartch writes, only thirty-two of sixty-two students managed to get through the course. At all times Illich was, as his friend Joe Fitzpatrick said, "a sign of contradiction" who quite deliberately evoked strong reactions. Hartch quotes one priest as saying, "The Monsignor is aiming too high, too high for me and others of my capacity." Another unhappy priest complained of Illich and his staff's "rigorism." A French Canadian woman who attended in 1962 felt that the "program...brings students to the edge of hysteria and chase[s] half of them away." By 1965 even John Considine, finally disillusioned, was complaining that the students "morale" was being undermined. There were of course also those who experienced CIF training as an awakening, and Hartch occasionally quotes them too, but the voices of the disappointed and offended tend to predominate. Perhaps one can get the flavour of the good Illich did from a remark his friend the Bishop of Cuernavaca, Méndez Arceo, made to Francine Duplessix Gray who quotes it in her 1970 profile of Illich for

The New Yorker. “I love the way Illich tortures his missionaries,” the bishop told Gray. “Sometimes I cry with emotion at seeing aged men, elderly priests shed their old selves under his care.”

CIF was established as a missionary training centre but soon began to open other avenues as well. Its library expanded, its journal, *CIF Reports*, became a voice for various cultural ferments then bubbling in Latin America, and the ambitious publishing programme that was later characteristic of CIDOC was begun. As a result of meetings held under CIF auspices, a separate institute devoted to specifically Latin American pastoral methods was established. Its stated purpose was to foster “vernacular pastoral methods in a prophetic, servant Church of the poor.” This was one of the first stirrings of what became known as “liberation theology,” a movement in which CIF initially played a founding role. Illich later opposed this tendency, insofar as it involved a politicization of the church, but the project of a distinctive Latin American theology was initiated at a meeting he convened at CIF’s Brazilian outpost in Petropolis in early 1964, and *CIF Reports* was the journal in which its first expressions were exchanged. These developments constituted the positive side of Illich’s programme. He wasn’t just trying to keep away missionaries who had an ethnocentric and clerical/bureaucratic conception of the Church; he was also trying to put forward a new image of Latin America as a potential source of renewal. In 1963 he expressed his hope that Latin America, both in the sense of “occupation with it and preparation for it,” would have a “revolutionary influence on Church institutions outside of Latin America.” “We can therefore,” he said, “ever more speak of the responsibility which Latin America has towards the world and which it is exercising through CIF.” Illich, in other words, did not see North America as a

rich civilization whose bounty ought to be made to overflow into the lands of its southern neighbours. He saw it as a world itself in need of healing and rededication.

Illich's hope that Latin America might assert a "revolutionary influence" on a complacent Church in the "developed" countries is characteristic. He may have given the term his own twist, but he speaks frequently during this period of revolution. His first book, Celebration of Awareness (1970), is subtitled A Call for Institutional Revolution. Particularly telling, for me, is a letter Hartch reproduces from 1962. Illich was writing to his friend Joe Fitzpatrick, a Jesuit priest and professor of sociology at Fordham who had been Illich's ally since the early 1950's when they worked together on the integration of Puerto Rican immigrants into the Catholic Church in New York City. In the letter he urges him to abandon "the institutional frameworks that now allow you to be courageous" and to risk "total involvement" in CIF even at the cost of losing "respectability among your peers." If Fitzpatrick were to embrace this professional and spiritual "exile," then "in a way," Illich concludes, "you might be the first North American priest who with full consciousness of what it involves...joins the revolution." This is a letter to a dear friend – I can still remember with what pleasure Illich, many years later, introduced me to Joe Fitz, as he called him. It says something about what Illich himself was giving up, since his abilities would certainly have afforded him the comfortable priesthood and secure academic career that he is asking his friend to renounce. But more than that it shows that Illich, at this time, was in full earnest about revolution. The object of this revolution was what he spoke of in his late interviews with me as "the resurrection of the Church," the Church he refers to in various writing of the 1950's and 60's as a "sinking ship" and a "giant [which] begins to totter before it

collapses.” The only way to save it, as he argued in his essay “The Vanishing Clergyman,” would be to dismantle its whole corporate, clerical bureaucratic structure and return to mystery, surprise and celebration – Illich’s three great watchwords. The Church, he said, is “that surprise in the net, the pearl,” “a divine bud which will flower in eternity,” and “a sign to be lifted up among the nations.” This was the Church’s proper vocation, not manpower planning for Latin America, and, on the consistent evidence of what he said during his years as a churchman, he believed, in the spirit of the times, that the revolution he imagined could happen and that he was called to do everything in his power to see that it did.

This brings me to what I see as an ambiguity, and perhaps an ambivalence in Hartch’s book. Hartch understands and states clearly that Illich was not against mission as such. “He decried cultural imperialism posing as mission,” Hartch writes, “not the concept of mission itself.” And yet elsewhere he refers to Illich’s “anti-missionary” campaign and even, on one occasion, to an “anti-missionary plot.” This seems wrong to me. Illich had a clearly articulated philosophy of mission, which honoured his Lord’s instruction to spread the Gospel. How else call the Church “a sign to be lifted up among the nations”? But Illich also believed that a staid, complacent and unimaginative American Church could not be such a sign under the conditions that prevailed in the 1960’s. Consider: first, that the United States was then actively supporting dictatorships in Latin America which used torture as an instrument of government. Illich had first hand experience with one such – the murderous military junta that ruled Brazil with American connivance after 1964 – and, later, he published an open letter to Paul VI in *Commonweal* condemning the Pope’s silence about the atrocities of this regime. Second,

a development crusade was then underway – in Latin America it took the form of the Alliance for Progress. Illich characterized development on the terms dictated by the donors as a “modernization of poverty” and offered evidence for his belief that development and mission were being conflated. And, finally, the American missionary initiative was a bureaucratic programme and not an expression of missionary vocation. As early as 1946 John Considine had written a book called Call for Forty Thousand, in which he called for the American church to send that many missionaries to Latin America. That call later translated into the plan endorsed by Pius XII, implemented by John XXIII, and continued by Paul VI that the American Church should assign 10% of its personnel to Latin America. (The number 40,000 was chosen as a “tithe,” which traditionally was the 10% of one’s income due to the church.) Illich viewed this plan as a colonial, rather than evangelical undertaking. These are substantial reasons, and, for me, they explain why Illich opposed a certain practice and interpretation of mission without opposing evangelization as such.

Hatch’s ambivalence’s also extends to his characterization of Illich. Here I should confess a prejudice. Although I met Illich in the later 60’s, I knew him mainly in the last fourteen years of his life, and I’m sure that the man I knew was an altogether sweeter and mellower man than the angular, ambitious and sometimes proud campaigner whose portrait Hatch attempts. Nevertheless, I think there may be some confusion in this portrait between Illich’s personality and certain calculated gestures – poses, one might say – that he felt were required to accomplish the purposes he had set himself. Illich was certainly a theatrical man, who liked to shock, but I bridled a little at the

description of him as “difficult,” “prickly” “confrontational.” Again I would say that his action should not be separated from his purposes and his calling.

Hartch’s critique of Illich culminates in his conclusion. There he argues that Illich’s opposition to Considine’s crusade was uncharacteristic. He speaks of “the anomaly of Illich’s prolonged disobedience.” The idea is that even though the young Illich, in Hartch’s words, “often ignored rules and regulations,” and even though the later Illich trounced virtually every major modern institution in his writings, the period of the 1960’s stands out because only then did he defy the whole hierarchy of the Church. The relevant passage is worth quoting in full:

Illich convinced himself that he knew better than one pope, then another, and then another. He knew better than the Pontifical Commission on Latin American. He knew better than the American and Latin American bishops. He knew better than the Second Vatican Council. The popes and the bishops and the most important Church council since the Council of Trent were all wrong: American missionaries were so dangerous that he was justified in using any means necessary to foil their plans.

The tone here seemed to me, at first reading, almost bullying, as if the sheer number of pontiffs he was opposing should have cowed Illich into submission, but I think it does reflect a serious and substantial difference between Hartch and Illich on the question of obedience. Hartch says that Illich, in standing against the whole hierarchy of his church, “was flirting with the Promethean arrogance that he condemned in others.”

And yet, Illich loved the Church above all things and, more than once, spoke of himself as an obedient son. How can this be understood? I think the answer lies in a distinction Illich made in his conversations with *New Yorker* writer Francine Du Plessix Gray between the Church as “She” and the Church as “It.” (Gray’s profile of Illich can be found in her book 1970 Divine Disobedience) The Church as “She” – I quoted part of this passage earlier – is “that surprise in the net, the pearl. *She* is the mystery, the kingdom among us. The identity of the Church as She will remain through whatever changes she is currently undergoing.” The Church as It, on the other hand, is “the institution.” “I can talk about It,” he goes on, “only in sociological terms. I’ve never had trouble creating factions and dissent towards the Church as It.” This quotation allows us to see, I think, why Illich did not consider himself to be in the grip of “Promethean arrogance” in opposing what he regarded as a corrupt and colonial account of mission. He was not standing against the Church as She. He disputed no item of faith and in no way questioned the Church’s *magisterium*, the Latin word by which the Roman Church designates its teaching authority. He opposed the Church as It, arguing against its policy not its doctrine, and this is why he could take the position he did without compromising his duty of obedience.

In the final section of the book from which the above passage is drawn Hartch also reveals that he thinks he knows where Illich went wrong. “The missing procedure in Illich’s investigations,” he says, “was a careful inquiry into the nature of mission itself.” Then he goes further and argues that Illich betrayed his own convictions. “Personal experience with oafish priests in Puerto Rico, Americanizing missionaries in Colombia, and indelicate Papal Volunteers in Cuernavaca led him not to deeper reflection but to

setting aside or bracketing his beliefs about missions. If questioned directly he affirmed the missionary call of the Church, but in practice he did not want to see missionary activity in Latin America.” Now Hartch knows, and acknowledges elsewhere, that Illich conducted an extensive inquiry into the nature of missions, and left behind an inspiring record of it in several of the essays that are published in The Church, Change and Development. So why does he say that Illich failed to carry out “a careful inquiry?” It seems plain that he does not think that Illich carried out a careless inquiry, but rather that he was wrong. Hartch gives two main reasons: the first is that he thinks the transmission of Christianity can occur even through the most flawed media. African Christianity, he argues, is now a vibrant, “indigenized” faith despite its problematic colonial origins. “Regardless of their intention, and often in direct contradiction of their intentions, he says, “missionaries can serve as catalysts of cultural revival.” Second he thinks that “the mission field” is an irreplaceable and indispensable scene of dialogue. The “thousands” of missionaries whom Illich drove away, in Hartch’s view, were an opportunity foregone – each one a bridge that was never crossed, a chance of greater intercultural understanding that died in its crib. In fact, Hartch even thinks that Illich shot himself in the foot by so effectively discrediting missions because, by doing so, Illich deprived himself of the very ground on which he might have made himself understood.

The largely non-religious friends and colleagues with whom he collaborated in Germany lacked the theological background to engage the religious side of his argument, while most Christian intellectuals either could not escape the shackles of ... modernity itself or lacked the cultural and historical resources to appreciate

its profundity. *Only on the mission field could Illich have found his peers.* [My italics]

Hartch's disagreement with Illich, it seems to me, reproduces the perennial debate between reform and revolution. Illich was explicitly revolutionary. His claim may have rested on the witness of the New Testament, and the practice of the early Church, rather than some projected utopia, but it was still effectively revolutionary in the face of a Church that had become, in his words, "the world's largest non-governmental bureaucracy." He called for a new, de-clericalized church, and for a practice of mission that followed the spirit of Jesus who sent his disciples out to preach and heal with the instruction "to take nothing for your journey but a staff." (Mark 6:8) In the absence of such changes, he saw the American church as "standing on the side of W.R. Grace and Company, Esso, the Alliance for Progress...and whatever is holy in the Western pantheon" and, therefore, as a fatally compromised source of aid for the Latin American church.

Hartch doesn't refute these claims. He doesn't even dispute them. In a sense, he simply turns away from them at the end, and declares Illich's procedure to have been self-defeating. This is a substantial argument, and one that Illich was often taxed with: a critique so total, his opponents said, removes any grounds for constructive action. In the case in question, no missionaries go, the Gospel is not preached, not even badly, isolation intensifies, and Illich ends up with no one to talk to. But this argument also overlooks something: that Illich envisioned a different way of doing things, and invited others to share his vision. Had more than a few accepted, new paths would have opened, other

encounters would have occurred, the Gospel would have been preached in a different way. Even as it was, Illich never said, don't come to Latin America, any more than he said, don't preach the Gospel. He argued that the missionary enterprise, as then imagined by a bureaucratic Church deeply entangled in American geo-political hegemony, was a Trojan horse, a poisoned gift. If Illich was right in this view, then surely he was not wrong to follow its consequences to the lengths he did in trying to undermine this enterprise. He never, to my knowledge, denounced or failed to recognize a true missionary.

The Prophet of Cuernavaca, as I've said, focuses mainly on the years of the years between 1961 and 1976, and most intensively on the years before 1969 when Illich resigned from Church service. But Todd Hartch also tries to take the measure of Illich's work as a whole. One chapter called "The Grammar of Silence" begins with a letter John Holt wrote to Illich in 1971. "I am distressed and discouraged to note," Holt says in this letter, "how little even those people who spend many weeks or months at CIDOC understand what you are saying and how little their own lives or ways of thinking are touched by it." Hartch endorses Holt's view that Illich was not well understood and says that he finds it "surprising that someone as intelligent as Illich...caused such confusion." "Many of his friends and supporters," he goes on to say, "longed for the day when he would produce a clear, direct and simple speech or text, but he never did." No evidence is given for this statement, i.e. no friends or supporters are cited, and, though it's certainly true that lots of people, at one time or another, found Illich hard to understand, I think it's quite an exaggeration to say that his friends waited in vain for him to clarify his position. It's probably also worth noting in passing that, in my experience, people who said they

didn't understand Illich often actually meant that they didn't accept his arguments. But, however that may be, what I would like to take up here is not Hartch's claim but his explanation of it. "The reason for this lack of lucidity," he says "was that most of his teaching and writing had a hidden purpose." The term "hidden" is then supplemented, in the following pages, by a number of other equally pregnant words including "coded" and 'camouflaged" and "obscured." What is being kept out of sight, of course, is Illich's theological agenda.

I think a serious misapprehension is at work here. One of Illich's most sensitive and attuned interpreters, the Italian scholar Fabio Milana, has written that after his withdrawal from the church Illich's condition was one of "exile." This seems true – Illich did not cease to be a priest just because he was forced to withdraw from the formal exercise of clerical functions, rather he moved into what could well be understood as missionary settings where his faith was often not intelligible on its face. He himself told an assembly of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in 1996 that, "when speaking in Bremen or Philadelphia [i.e. in a secular setting] I felt I ought to shroud my ultimate motive in apophasy [i.e. proceeding by way of negation rather than affirmation]. I did not want to be taken for a proselytizer, a fundamentalist or worse, a Catholic theologian; I do not have that mission." But this discretion was something other than camouflage. Illich sought common ground with his auditors in analyzing those institutions which modern persons most devoutly believe in – schools, hospitals, prisons, and the like. He believed that these institutions were descendants of the Church and would have been unthinkable without the Church's prior effort to guarantee salvation and render it punctual and reliable. But this does not mean that his analysis was only

valuable as a coded critique of the Church. The school and the hospital are the effective forms of the Church among us – their “liturgies” are the ones that matter to us. To understand what they do, and what they say to us about who we are, is not merely coded theology, or an allegory of church reform. The church may have pioneered the dispensing of grace, but who now promises us “life more abundant,” if not the institutions of health and life-long learning?

It is also important that Illich never disguised his idea that modern institutions bear the genetic signature of their church originals. It is quite explicit in Deschooling Society where he says that the school system is “the repository of society’s myth” and performs functions “common to powerful churches through history.” He speaks of the school as a “sacred precinct,” a “sacred milieu,” a “drawn-out labyrinthine ritual,” and a place where “the intricate rubrics of initiation” are enacted. This is not to deny that Illich at the end of his life said things he had never said before about what the corruption of the Church meant to him. But he also insisted, when talking to me about these matters, that he spoke “not as a theologian, but as a believer and an historian.” And to speak as an historian meant to recognize that “the Incarnation... represents a turning point in the history of the world for believer and unbeliever alike. Belief refers to what exceeds history, but it also enters history and changes it forever.” This is not the place to pursue the point further, but I do think that if Illich manifestly thought that the historian could follow the rocky road from the Incarnation to modern worship of life and health, and felt that tracing this road was his vocation as an historian, then not much is gained by calling him, against his wishes, a theologian.

The question remains: did Illich, as Hartch intimates, “stop just short of clarity”? I obviously don’t think so. He may have sometimes “veiled his ultimate motive”, as he told the Catholic philosophers, because he didn’t want to be misunderstood or too easily categorized as “fundamentalist.... proselytizer...or...theologian.” But this to me does not mean he pulled his punches or obscured his meaning. I would rather say that he tried to discern how much it was possible to say in a given setting. This does not mean that he did not sometimes misjudge. And it’s true that as an old man he did sometimes feel that he should have been more explicit about the faith that animated his critique. But it is also true that his effort to make himself understood in settings where he could not presume on a shared faith produced an extraordinary and illuminating analysis of modern institutions, an analysis which is much more than encoded theology.

Todd Hartch, in his title, calls Ivan Illich a prophet. This was a word that Illich himself foreswore, once telling the then President of Italy, Romano Prodi, when Prodi asked him if he wasn’t engaged in “a continuation of prophecy for our time,” that “the time of prophecy lies behind us. The only chance now lies in our taking this vocation as that of the friend.” This is an interesting statement because it recognizes that prophecy remains a vocation – a calling – but then claims that this summons is now best answered through friendship. Still, the word is hard to avoid when writing about Illich because prophetic is probably the most readily understandable word for the mode of clairvoyant denunciation in which Illich often writes. My question would be whether Todd Hartch has allowed the full prophetic force of Illich’s work to reach him, or whether he has not rather tried, at certain points in his book, to have his cake and eat it too: on the one hand building up the image of Illich’s volcanic genius, on the other standing safely aside in

judgment of his misguided radicalism. I do not want to say that this ambivalence undermines the value of the work. It doesn't. Hartch seems to me a fair-minded and even handed reporter when it comes to the historical record, and I am extraordinarily grateful to him for the work he has done in opening a window onto Illich's CIF/CIDOC years. I should say also that in his conclusion he recognizes the power and continuing pertinence of Illich's critique of modern institutions. More than that Hartch acknowledges that Illich "risked everything he had to present his message to the world." So the difference I am left with, I suppose, is that Hartch thinks that Illich, in at least one critical respect, was wrong, while I think he was right.

Todd Hartch, The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the Modern West, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0190204563

Reviewed by Pat Inman

The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Hartch on Illich

Todd Hartch has written a scholarly and well-researched biography on Ivan Illich, a controversial figure in the 1960s and 1970s. Illich was a Catholic priest and social critic who cited the growth of institutions as responsible for much of what ails the modern world. Hartch teaches Latin American history and world Christianity at Eastern Kentucky University. His research focusing on missions in Latin America provides a strong voice in this publication looking at Illich's life in the context of his role in the Catholic Church and, more specifically, as an advisor to those serving missions in Latin America. Hartch discusses Illich's attempt to discourage missionaries from spreading the gospel of consumerism in great detail. This narrow focus is appropriate for Hartch who has studied and written about missionaries in Latin America.

Hartch starts with a detailed description of Illich's priesthood and the influences affecting his spiritual formation. This is an area not previously addressed in other biographies of Illich. The author speaks of the "lives of Illich," separating the "Catholic period" from his "secular period." The remainder of the book discusses how these "lives" transitioned. I would argue his life was more of a transition from a focus on political advocacy to individual relationship.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I write this review as a friend of Illich. I am one of many. I would make the argument Illich's friends, more than anything affected his life focus and contributed to a worldview that was both critical and celebratory. It was not their thought, but

his belief that it is only through relationship to one another that we can create a life-sustaining culture.

Shortly before his death, Ivan asked me to help him look at how his thoughts had changed on education over the years. Spending a week with him in conversation after having read most of his writing, I came to realize that his thoughts had not so much “changed” but deepened and simplified. His initial focus on political action for others transitioned to a mantra of simplicity, “Be a friend.”

His initial critique of institutions had to do with their scale. The larger they become, the greater need to standardize individuals to maximize efficiency. Differences or “gifts” made management more difficult. Looking to the uniqueness of friends just got in the way. One did not pick up the banner of social justice for a particular population as part of a political movement, but rather worked in the spirit of friendship. His critiques of the Church, schools and medicine provided an illustration of what happens when institutions become more important than relationships.

In concluding, Hartch asks a fair question—What would have happened had Illich not been so effective in discouraging missionaries from supporting “needy” populations? Did the world miss an opportunity to do more good than harm? Would individuals in “need” not appreciate the “improved” quality of life missionaries were sent to bring?

In asking missionaries to question a culture of consumption, Illich asked them to view their work from another lens. Global policy suggested lives are disposable and the earth’s resources unlimited. Illich asked them to question this. He asked them to develop “convivial” tools to create a life-sustaining society rather than life-destroying . In such a context

missionaries may have used their courage and creativity to develop a sustainable economy offering a culture of peace rather than a culture of divisive inequality.

Todd Hartch, The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the Modern West, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0190204563

Reviewed by Daniel Grego

Reading Todd Hartch Reading Ivan Illich

1.

Sadly, there has never been a time in American history when so many have so articulately identified the God of Christian faith with an idol. Today “God” is understood by many to sanction American capitalism, consumerism, and empire. Identifying “God” with American interests and policies, they can view all opposition to the United States as the expression of evil.

John B. Cobb Jr.
The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God (p. 150.)

In October 2009, Todd Hartch published an article in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (vol. 33, no. 4) entitled: “Ivan Illich and the American Catholic Missionary Initiative in Latin America.” He concluded his analysis this way:

Ultimately, Illich did not have enough trust in the Gospel message, which can transform cultures regardless of missionary ineptitude and bring even American missionaries to Pauline humility. (p. 188.)

Now, in 2015, Hartch has written *The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West*. His publisher, Oxford University Press, promotes the book as “the first biographical account of Illich in English.” (OUP website)

I will be very grateful if Hartch’s writings inspire others to investigate Illich’s life and thought. I would welcome a renaissance of Illich studies. However, I find Hartch’s work so far disappointing. I am not sure he fully understands “the prophet from Cuernavaca.”

Let me begin these reflections by examining his comment about Illich and “the Gospel message.”

2.

Elsewhere, I have written that Illich might best be understood as a “Christian anarchist.” (“Thirteen Ways of Looking at Ivan Illich,” *International Journal of Illich Studies*, Volume 3, No.1.) Two passages from the gospels were of particular importance to him: St. Matthew 4:1-11 and St. Luke 10:25-37.

The verses from St. Matthew describe Jesus’ fast in the desert and his temptation by the Devil. Finding Jesus exhausted and hungry after he had been fasting for forty days and forty nights, the Devil tempts him with three types of power: economic, psychological, and political. Jesus refuses all three. Illich believed that renouncing power was a critical component of “the Gospel message.”

The passage from St. Luke contains the parable of the Good Samaritan. What Illich found so significant in the story was the radical freedom Jesus advocated to step

outside of the traditional boundaries of one's ethnic group and to offer compassion to the other. He told David Cayley:

This doctrine about the neighbor, which Jesus proposes, is utterly destructive of ordinary decency, of what had, until then, been understood as ethical behavior...In antiquity, hospitable behavior, or full commitment in my action to the other, implies a boundary drawn around those to whom I can behave in this way...Jesus taught the Pharisees that the relationship which he had come to announce to them as most completely human is not one that is expected, required, or owed. It can only be a free creation between two people... (*The Rivers North of the Future*, p. 51.)

Given the ethics of the ancient world, as Illich understood them, the Samaritan did not have any obligation to aid the Jew he found beaten up on the side of the road. Yet, he was moved to help him and stepped beyond the boundary of what was expected to do so.

Perhaps even more important for Illich's understanding of "the Gospel message" was the "good news" of the Incarnation. (What a lovely coincidence that Illich's first assignment as a priest was to Incarnation Parish in New York.) Illich believed he could find Christ in the eyes of everyone he met, which is one of the reasons he was so critical of anything that came between him and the other, whether it was technology or the preconceptions of Freudianism, Marxism, or even the evangelism of the church.

Illich was prophetic in the sense that he often saw the future implications of policies or techniques long before others. With his belief in the renunciation of power, or domination, and in his embrace of radical freedom, Illich may have seen the missionary movement in Latin America in the 1960s as the type of idolatry that John B. Cobb Jr. describes above. I think it's possible that it was Illich's *complete trust* in "the Gospel message," as he understood it, which led him to oppose that movement as energetically as he did.

3.

I think Hartch is ill-served by his publisher promoting *The Prophet of Cuernavaca* as a "biography." It's not.

Illich's life can be divided into thirds: the first from his birth in Vienna in 1926 until his ordination in Rome in 1951; the second from his time working as a priest at Incarnation Parish in New York until the closing of the Center for Intercultural Documentation, or CIDOC, in 1976; and the final third consisting of his itinerant teaching at various universities in Europe and the United States during which time he presided over a "traveling circus" of colleagues and friends with whom he examined the "certainties" underlying the modern West until his death in Bremen in 2002.

Hartch's book offers very little about the first and last thirds of Illich's life. His focus is on the period between 1951 and 1976, with most of his attention devoted to Illich's work in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and other parts of Latin America in the 1960s.

In the end, Hartch's conclusions in his book are similar to those of his 2009 article: Illich was wrong to oppose the missionary movement in Latin America because it was Illich's own experience in Latin America that led to his radical critique of the modern West. Hartch writes:

Without his appreciation of Puerto Rican folk Catholicism, of village life, of peasant culture, of life lived outside of industrial society, there would have been no attack on missions, no *Deschooling Society*, no *Medical Nemesis*. (p. 166.)

He continues:

Who knows what would have happened if the priests, sisters, and lay missionaries discouraged by Illich had poured into Latin America? ...Isn't it possible...that some of them would have seen what Illich saw? Even the trickle of missionaries who did serve in Latin America has provided its share of critics of American culture, politics, and religion. Imagine if there were a thousand more such people active in American life today. (pp. 166-167.)

When I read this argument, I could not help remembering another American "intervention" in the "Third World." There were soldiers who returned from Southeast Asia "radicalized," who founded the Vietnam Veterans against the War. Would this fact have been justification for the U.S. to continue that criminal, immoral war?

As Illich saw, even when the intentions are “good,” or perhaps *especially* when the intentions are “good,” the damage done to indigenous cultures by these invasions can be huge. I think Hartch would benefit from seeing Carol Black’s powerful film, “Schooling the World: the White Man’s Last Burden.” And, although the report came out after the release of Hartch’s book, he should also consider the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which concluded that Canadian missionaries perpetrated “cultural genocide” on the First Nations peoples of that country.

As Hartch notes, Illich wasn’t completely against North Americans visiting Latin America, as long as they came (paraphrasing David Cayley from *Part Moon, Part Travelling Salesman*) “in all humility...with something to learn, rather than as developers and modernizers with something to teach.” But this is not easy. As Thomas Merton wrote in “A letter to Pablo Antonio Cuadra Concerning Giants”:

The greatest sin of the European-Russian-American complex which we call “the West,” is not only greed and cruelty, not only moral dishonesty and infidelity to truth, but above all *its unmitigated arrogance towards the rest of the human race.* (Italics in the original text.) *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (p. 380.)

I think Illich’s campaign against “the war on subsistence” was partially informed by his experiences in Puerto Rico and Mexico. How could it not be? But, I think the more important basis for his critique came, as I mentioned above, from his complete trust in the Gospel message, as he understood it.

Again, I will be grateful if Hartch's book attracts others to study Illich's life and work. I was impressed with his extensive research into the intrigues in which Illich was engaged in the middle third of his life. But, after reading *The Prophet of Cuernavaca*, I still don't think Hartch really "gets" Illich.

For a while now, I have believed we need three books: an "Illich Reader" in which the most important essays from Illich's published work are gathered in one volume for students and scholars; a "Posthumous Illich," created by a multilingual team of scholars, containing the best of Illich's yet-to-be published writings; and a good intellectual biography. We still need all three.

Daniel Grego
Wild Space Farm

Todd Hartch, *The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the Modern West*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0190204563

Reviewed by David Kast

Ivan Illich, Me and Thoughts On *The Prophet of Cuernavaca*

In 2006 I traveled to Edmonton, Alberta, to attend the Sacred Web Conference, *Tradition in the Modern World*. There I met briefly with Prof. Seyyed Nasr, one of the principal speakers. Some may recall that Professor Nasr spoke at the *Education & Technology: Asking the Right Questions* Conference at Penn State (Sept. 17-20, 1997) to honor Jacques Ellul and Ivan Illich. A widely respected member of the traditionalist school associated with Rene Guenon, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Frithjof Schuon, Prof. Nasr teaches Islamic Studies at George Washington University in Washington, DC. I found his talk at Penn State unique and unlike his writings and usual manner of speaking. While most of the talks on that day were about technology, limits, education and modernity, his was a plea for the West and us at the conference to awaken to what we were doing worldwide and particularly in the Middle East, and for the United States in particular to please leave the Middle East alone, to stop imposing itself and its ideology, its industrial and technological model, its arrogance on that part of the world. The talk was a humble plea, unlike his more usually magisterial and erudite, even austere, manner of speaking. I was deeply impressed with it.

Nasr had been invited to speak at the Penn State conference as a friend of Illich who had introduced both Illich and his ideas to Iran in the mid-70s when he, Nasr, was

living and teaching there. So I approached him at the Sacred Web conference, introduced myself, and asked if he could tell me something about Illich's visit to Iran and how he saw Illich vis-à-vis the traditionalist school. But Prof. Nasr demurred and sent me to speak with Prof. William Chittick, another Islamic scholar (who teaches at SUNY Stony Brook and who Nasr said was closer friends with Illich). Prof. Chittick had studied with Prof. Nasr in Iran during the 70s and had met Illich there. He was happy to converse with me.

Prof. Chittick told me that Illich had said that he wanted to write so clearly that an engineer would understand and accept his arguments. Then Chittick looked at me and smiled saying, "But I don't really think most engineers are likely to read Illich." I asked him what he thought Illich's attitude toward the traditionalist school had been and he replied that he didn't really think Illich had been much interested in it.

This is a rather long story that I tell for a couple of reasons. Illich was a devout and orthodox Catholic thinker—orthodox by his own calling and devout in the sense that he never relinquished his deep spiritual ties to or faith in the Church or the Christian ethos, the teaching of the incarnation. Though Illich had many friends from other religious traditions, one never sensed that he judged or tried to understand them from his particularly Catholic perspective. Nor did he compare the fundamentals of others. Instead, Illich took people as they were, reacting and interacting with them as they and he found one another. Each was obviously quite appropriately there. Clearly he spoke from his own tradition, he never hid that, but you see, we all do whether we think so or not...even if our own tradition is the modern non-tradition!

In Todd Hartch's, *Prophet of Cuernavaca*, I find a deep respect for and appreciation of Illich's work. Yet, even though Hartch is a professor of religion (at Eastern Kentucky University), I don't think he quite fully grasps in Illich the religious grappling, the effort to articulate through secular discourse, through critique, the deeper wholeness to which we all are heirs and which I see Illich wanting for us ... wanting us to know. As Illich was to later say more explicitly (although he would say so also in fragments along the way), it finally came down to, in the vernacular, learning how to bear our own suffering, to share hospitality, to embrace our fragility and imminent deaths. One thing I learned from reading Illich and meeting him was to recognize the wholeness of our being as spiritual (mental) and corporeal beings. We often dream of peace in such abstract and universalist ways, but I will now say to people (really telling myself also), "Something I can touch with my hands, hear with my ears directly, see, taste, smell ... and feel (with my heart), that is what I can deal with now, that's all." Let's see now, recognizing my contingency, my weakness, my poverty, my powerlessness.

Toward the end of the 60s, Illich promised the Church not to speak about the Church or religion directly (and how hard that must have been for him to do). He pretty much kept this promise until near the end of his life. Yet, in his own *apophatic* way (Illich's "new way of doing theology," as Lee Hoinacki would say many times) Illich delved into historical research on modern certitudes and systems—reaching beneath their encrusting chimeras of reality to a richer, simpler, convivial wholeness based eventually on friendship. In the process he laid bare our fear of death, our insecurity and our grasping at manufactured needs.

Although Hartch does capture a good deal of the dynamism of Illich, his mercurial and prescient vision as well as his fiery temperament and his interactions, both positive and negative, with many others, if one wants an overview of Illich's work, one were better off going to *Ivan Illich in Conversation* with David Cayley (and don't miss its excellent introduction) and the two introductions by Lee Hoinacki and Carl Mitcham in *The Challenges of Ivan Illich*. All of the essays in that latter book are good but better yet, I urge those interested in Illich to plough through his original writings. They are many and rich.

For those unfamiliar with Illich's thought, Illich had two main periods to his active publishing life: his CIDOC years and a little after (from the 60s to the late 70s); and then from the early 80s until the end of his life. During the earlier period, Illich was in some sense an activist. He not only gave clairvoyant and prescient critiques of modern institutions, but also suggested needed change (he did so in *Energy and Equity* (1973) and *Medical Nemesis* (1975) but had pretty much left off this by the time of *Shadow Work* (1981)). (In passing I might add, in reference to Prof. Chittick's recounting of Illich's earlier stated desire, that *Energy and Equity* probably most clearly illustrates writing that even an engineer would understand and accept.)

In the earlier period Illich often spoke of the urgent need for research and warned of imminent disaster. He spoke prophetically. He advocated for networks of learning (*Deschooling Society* (1971)) and for limiting speed (*Energy and Equity*). In *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) Illich writes:

“The transition to socialism cannot be effected without an inversion of our present institutions...the retooling of society will remain a pious dream unless the ideals of socialist justice prevail.” (12)

One can detect an urgency in Illich’s message. Much of his teaching in Cuernavaca, as suggested by Hartch, had the somewhat contradictory nature of demands for action, leadership, highly trained personnel (“experts”) and imposed discipline while also counseling the search for freedom from institutional, industrialized control and professionals. And there were his attacks on the missionary enterprise. His critiques and research continued alongside this urgency.

Then in the late 70s a change began taking place. One sees it clearly by the time of *Shadow Work* (1981) and certainly in *Gender* (1982), the talks collected in *In the Mirror of the Past* (1992), in *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind* (1988), *H₂O and the Waters of Forgetfulness* (1985), and in *In the Vineyard of the Text* (1993). He is no longer proselytizing. He is offering studies in the changing certitudes of our lives and their historical genesis. He is noting watersheds, the emergence of new metaphors. (See for example *The Scopic Past and the Ethics of the Gaze* (1998) and *Guarding the Eye in the Age of Show* (2001)).

At a meeting in Maine in 1984, Illich addressed a gathering of friends and colleagues who saw Illich as a progressive, a socialist (read again the quote above from *Tools*) and who were looking for guidance and approval for progressive social change. Perhaps, they had missed many of Illich’s early warnings and skepticism toward all systems approaches and also his early adoption of many ideas of Leopold Kohr on scale

and proportion. Illich's ideas about education and medicine had changed, had grown. By then, he had clearly recognized in the socialist ideal and in the free-school and self-help movements the same problems of dependency on manufactured needs and on systems. Illich had clarified within himself an understanding of the vernacular. He had noted its loss and no longer saw "the" or even "a" solution. Still, he sought to clarify our position, to understand its roots and the need for all to see those roots in order that then we each or in tandem could work out our own solutions through friendship, hospitality. He had renounced any form of guruship. He had recognized his own powerlessness and its necessity. In the process of this change, he could not allow those who clung to what he saw as a flawed utopian illusion to try to hold him there. They did not see or understand what he now saw.

I was not at that meeting, but in talks with John Ohliger who was, I was told that Ivan very strongly, even harshly, put off many of those earlier followers of his and that a permanent rupture took place between himself and many of them. I understand how many progressives can fail to see the prison of utopian idealism and its large scale social planning. I also can understand how someone like Illich could not allow himself to be tethered, and also how many others could be hurt by his apparent radical turn of direction and the way in which he presented it to them, particularly if they had not seen the germs of it in his earlier work.

Among the things that I enjoyed in Hartch's book are the stories of people who loved and admired Illich from his early career to the end, of people who had fallings out with him and others who were simply perplexed by him or thought he didn't make any sense at all. Hartch also shares stories of some of Illich's personal experiences. One story

concerns Illich's 40-day stay at Assekrem in the Ahaggar Mountains of Algeria in 1959. Illich spent his time there in "complete exterior and interior silence," sleeping on a stone bed in a cave, relishing the intense visual experience, and having "the most wonderful time of his life...." "The immensity of the desert," Illich said of Assekrem, "overwhelms both the power and weakness of men...." (27)

What attracted me most to Illich were not the ideas, rich as they were and are, but the deep religious sense I felt, the wholeness and compassion and the pain, the anguish, that permeate his writing without him having to say a word in that vein explicitly. And of course, the architecture of his thought.

Illichian Inclination¹

by
R. Alan Wight

The present disjunction between an ‘adult’ society that pretends to be humane,
And a school environment mocking reality must not be maintained. (14)
This is a call for disestablishing the establishment,
For re-socialization a society that mistakes schooling with education.

We are bred to perpetuate this modernized poverty,
Through the omni-application of individual sovereignty.
We embody competitive consumption, (5)
Learned in our obligatory schooling,
This is a fundamental societal presumption.

We obey the secular priests creating sacred curricular milieu
Churches, Temples, Shrines, Mosques, classrooms, and schools,
Worship directed towards our magical institutionalized wombs. (15)

I am enraged at the thought that I too have been co-opted. (17)
Potential dissenters and countercultural members are forced to dis-member,
Blinded by the ritualized game of graded promotions and tenured notions, (20)
We are branded in the style of our modern myths,
Perpetuating this Machiavellian monolithic monopoly!

Education is only education if sold in credentialed form, (18)
Certificates and diplomas have become our ritualized norm. (18)
Learned and degreed teachers impart their formalized knowledge,
We regurgitate on que, from K to college.
Molded to preach a capitalist equality and representative democracy for all,
While we prepackage the values of modern suburban shopping malls.

In an Illichian attempt for personal demythologization, (18)
We must contemplate the academy’s initiations,
Prefabricated bundles of “facts,”
Now injected through online instruction,
Super marching forward PROGRESS ---> ----->----->
Fueled by rational logic deduction!
It is our duty to negate this systems’ ecological destruction!

¹ The parentheses correspond to page numbers that indicate inspirational passages from *Deschooling Society*.