

The International Journal of Illich Studies

Vol. 5 No. 1 (2016)

ISSN 1948-4666

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Illichian Thought in Action

Introduction to Volume V, No. 1 (2016)

Now is the time of Ivan Illich. Today.

First, we need his courage. Very early in his life, he cultivated the courage to see the current horror, in all its darkness. He refused to join the mass closing of eyes and minds and hearts; pretending that to live a “normal” life was possible ... that the current “crisis” would come to an end one of these days – in the manner of all its predecessors.

Ivan dared to intensely gaze; to see while the mainstream looked on with eyes wide shut. Ivan explained time and again that a prophet is not a person with a crystal ball. Rather, prophets see deeply into the present, observing trends embedded in it. Prophets understand the present having developed the hindsight enabling them to anticipate what may happen. He dared to see when it was more convenient to look away ... to pretend that the changes were only a new normal.

He was not alone, for sure. In 1967, for example, he invited his friends to join him in “A Call to Celebration.” In a spirit of awakening, Illich urged us “to face facts, rather than deal in illusions –to live change, rather than rely on engineering.” (p.13) His friend José María Sbert, reflecting on Illich’s invitation in the 60s wrote: “everything was called into question: family, work, education, success, sanity, madness, childrens’ care, love, urbanism, science, technology, progress, wealth....”(Sbert, 2009, p. 57) “Suddenly, all the youth in the world were united and found a common language to answer all questions. It was needed to change everything.” (Dehesa 1997, p. 23) There was a moment, observed Deleuze and Guattari, “in which it was possible to suddenly see what was intolerable in the society, and at the same time the possibilities of another social reality.” (Quoted in Weber 1998, 158).

Once again, writing in the 1970s, Illich was not alone when calling for institutional revolution. Not long after, however, he was alone when he dared to see the horror ... the tragedy of the path not taken. The path of hope denied, today we find ourselves in the thick of the violence and madness in which we are living. More than

ever, we need the courage Ivan Illich cultivated. Half a century later, we cannot but experience what is intolerable in this society, increasingly evident, making news everyday. At the same time, with Ivan Illich, we also cannot but see the possibilities of other social realities — of which we also have examples everyday. To join Ivan Illich in his hope and faith, we need his courage: allowing him to challenge all modern institutions—including his Church, his own convictions, dominant modes of thinking, science, and all the systems managed by the scientific frame of mind.

To understand Illich is to know that such courageous awareness cannot but be translated into action. We need to live the change, not to rely on engineering or even less on academic intellectual contortions. Yes, Ivan was an amazing erudite: medievalists, historians, sociologists, theologians and many others may reclaim Ivan as one prominent member of their privileged class. His erudition, notwithstanding, he was first and last, a man of action. Radically disinterested in power, he had no interest in becoming a leader organizing a vanguard to lead the masses. He worked assiduously and unflinchingly to influence the social reality of his time, to resist the horror and to both suggest and to construct another possibility. And Illich's specific attitude had a color, a shape: interculturality.

Illich's interculturality meant completely abandoning the universality in which he was shaped; fully opening himself to radical plurality. He anticipated what grassroots groups like the Zapatistas suggested: constructing a world in which many worlds can be embraced. That was Ivan's dream. Thus, he never suggested one single path out of the mess he was describing in so many fields. He fully assumed that after the collapse of every modern institution—the collapse we are observing today—we will be walking and making a wild diversity of paths. Not any single highway. No thank you!

In the conversation that follows with Gustavo Esteva, we discover how Ivan Illich became a man of action embedded in interculturality. Having arrived to New York to study the manuscripts of Alberto Magnus in Princeton, from one day to the next, Ivan Illich changed his path. Horrified to discover how his Church was mistreating the Puerto Rican *jibaritos*, Illich used his capacity as a Catholic priest to radically change such treatment, to change the reality in New York City. He, thus, anticipated many changes in his Church and in the social reality. On his new transformative path, he never ceased to

be a man of action even as his renown as a public intellectual became international overnight.

Today, more than ever, we need Ivan's guidance to fully understand the collapse of all modern institutions—the collapse that we still don't dare to see, despite the facts unraveling before our eyes. These unravelings are happening in the way Ivan anticipated. Too, Ivan also saw how people would react. Very precise descriptions of Illich's prescience can be found in the last pages of *Tools for Conviviality*.

In 1992, David Cayley asked him: "When you wrote *Tools for Conviviality*, you laid out a political program for inverting the structure of tools, as you put it. And now you're saying, I think, that it happened, but not in the way you anticipated." Ivan answered:

It happened in a way I had not anticipated. In the last words of that book 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 things that industry and government do are misused by people for their own purposes. (p.117)

Hundreds of millions of people, perhaps billions, are today using their brains and trusting their senses, as a condition for survival. And they are openly misusing whatever industry and government are producing. Again as a condition for survival, and with amazing imagination to escape from the current madness while beginning to construct a new world.

As the conversation follows, we can find the clues to what is happening now, to what we need to dare to see. Cayley says: "What I was quoting was your prediction that if our society continued on its present track we would in effect cease to be human beings. The way you put it was that we would 'break all bridges to a normative past.'" "This has happened," answers Ivan. (p.123) And he elaborates on a description of what was happening. It was almost impossible to accept such Illichian descriptions in 1992. Not surprisingly, many readers of Cayley's book were unable to fully grasp what Ivan was

saying. But today the conditions Illich prophesied are entirely evident. We can see around us many “people,” including children, who have ceased to be human beings; at least what humans have called human beings in the whole history of humankind. Ivan writes:

We are on the threshold of a still unnoticed transition from a political consciousness based on progress, growth, and development—rooted in the dreams of the Enlightenment—to a new yet unnamed consciousness defined by controls which ensure a ‘sustainable system’ of needs satisfaction. Development is dead, yes. But the well-meaning experts who propagate needs are now busily at work re-conceptualizing their discovery, and in the process redefining humanity yet again. The citizen is being redefined as a cyborg. The former individual, who as a member of a ‘population’ has become a ‘case,’ is now modeled in the image of an immune system that can provisionally be kept functioning if it is kept in balance by appropriate management.... Such a world has lost credibility in the matrix of a new world now conceived as a system. When the term, needs, is now used within this new context, it ‘functions’ as a euphemism for the management of citizens who have been reconceptualized as sub-systems within a population. (Illich in Sachs, 2010. p. 108)

Yes, Ivan was basically alone in seeing the horror of humans transmogrified. It took all the courage we join others in celebrating. His writings of the last ten years of his life offer some hints of what he was seeing—the age of systems replacing the age of tools—and he shared some of his insights with his closest friends, though not in public. (“I have become increasingly silent in public,” Illich remarked; He no longer had a language for sharing his insights with others. Cayley, 1992, p.125).

Still, Illich never fell into despair and even less into apocalyptic randomness. He still believed in what he wrote at the end of *Deschooling Society*: “Survival of the human race depends on its rediscovery (of hope) as a social force.” (p.106) He was still hoping that Epimethean men had already been born—people who value hope more than expectations, who love people more than products, who love the earth in which each can meet the other, who collaborate with their Promethean brother in the lighting of the fire and shaping of iron, but who do so to enhance their ability to tend and care and wait upon the other. (Pp.115-166)

No room for expectation, in this moment of danger, in this inhuman world in which are now living. Still, with Illich, we see lots of room for hope: "Another world is

not only possible,” clarifies Arundati Roy, “she's on the way and, on a quiet day, if you listen very carefully you can hear her breathe.” As Ivan also anticipated.

In offering the current issue of the *International Journal of Illich Studies*, we recognize in the diversity of submissions, the “stepping stones” suggested by Illich and laid by people around the globe as they humbly seek ways “out beyond the madness.” With Illich, our contributing authors along with people of all persuasions and walks are: questioning politics (Esteve); forging new ways of addressing the multiple crises and collapses in which we are now living (de Majo, Rivage-Seul); discerning Illich’s influences (Woll, Milano); and seeing Illich’s hope in recovering the “arts of living, suffering, and dying.” (Steinberg, Keeley) We are grateful to these contributors, and to the many whose simple yet profound recovery of *philia* and of hospitality will become the foundation upon which we all live together.

Sincerely,

Dana L. Stuchul and Madhu Suri Prakash, Co-editors
November, 2016

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Power, Politics, Friendship: Illich Offers Hope In Our Hard Times
A Conversation with Gustavo Esteva¹

Madhu Suri Prakash and Dana L. Stuchul

In the 60s and 70s you were living in Mexico City, only 60 kms. from CIDOC. Yet, you never sought to meet Ivan until the 1980s?

For many of us in the Marxist left, Ivan was merely a reactionary priest. We were not interested in reading him: even less meeting him. Vaguely, we were aware of the fact that he had become famous for his critiques of education and health. For us, that was irrelevant: mere tools of control and domination for reproducing the systems of capitalistic societies. We were still dreaming of socialist societies promising universal excellent systems of education and health. Cuba nourished our dreams. In spite of being a small, poor and sieged country, *Cubanos* had been able to establish what were probably, at the time, the best systems of education and health in the world. And they were remaining fully revolutionary!

The fact that Ivan was friends with Octavio Paz confirmed our prejudices. We acknowledged the courage of Paz in resigning as ambassador to India after the massacre of students in Tlatelolco in 1968. Still, Paz remained for us a reactionary poet and, at best, a liberal, very hostile to socialist thinking.

In our leftist jargon, “reactionary” meant someone who “reacts” against social change, revolutionary change, and someone who is trying to go back in history. People affiliated with the left, like Octavio Rodríguez Araujo, still dismiss Ivan as an enemy of progress and modernity and classify him in the ultra-right (*La Jornada*, 09/08/2016, “De mentiras y ultraderechistas in Morelos”). This is, of course, pure ignorance: they don’t read Ivan. It is a prejudice. They hear bells, but they don’t know where.

¹ The conversation, occurring in Cuernavaca and Mexico City, Mexico U.S.A, began in July 2016.

I must confess that a short presentation of Ivan was published in a leading Mexican newspaper, *Excelsior*, in the early 70s. I was very impressed with the text. I quoted Ivan in the first page of my first book. But I did not associate the guy of the article with the reactionary priest of Cuernavaca. And this basically implies that he was not in my personal radar.

What made you meet him finally? What was your impression of him? How did you become friends and co-conspirators?

Rodolfo Stavenhagen invited me to a seminar in *El Colegio de México* about the social construction of energy. Wolfgang Sachs would be the speaker. Rodolfo knew very well that I was not an academic or involved in the academic life, but he also knew that I had been reflecting on those lines and invited me to share my ideas about the “issue” of energy. In doing so, he assumed that I would offer a radical contrast, not convergence with Sachs’s ideas. I did not know that Ivan would be there. After Sachs’ presentation and two or three comments, Ivan intervened. Two sentences into the intervention by Illich, I was completely fascinated ... really fascinated. José María Sbert, my friend and Ivan’s protégé conspirator², also attended the seminar and invited us both for dinner at his home. This was my first opportunity to have a long conversation with the great guy.

I borrowed from José María several books by Ivan and started that very night to read them. I could not stop. His writing was a pure revelation ...smashing all my misconceptions of his being a mere reactionary priest.

It is important for me to put encountering Ivan in the context of my life and work. Since 1976, I had been living and working at the grassroots, with peasants and urban marginals. I was fascinated with my experiences there, but unable to understand their radically different worlds from the one in which I studied, lived and worked. Assuming for some time that it was my ignorance of that world, I frantically studied economics,

² Ivan asked Valentina Borremans (co-founder of CIDOC, Centro Intercultural de Documentación) to look for two very smart young guys in the faculty of economics of the National University. Valentina found José María Sbert and José Andrés Oteyza and both worked for Ivan over several years. José María remained a very close friend of Ivan until his death. José Andrés became a Minister and CEO of several transnational companies.

sociology, anthropology, political science. The more I studied, the less I understood. And then, one day, I don't know how and why, I took off the lenses of development, the categories in which I was educated. At the beginning, I was dazzled, as when you come out of a dark room to the light. But later I started to use my own eyes. Taking off the lenses of an educated man, the first personal transformation started with re-memembering my beloved *Zapotec* grandmother. Development had transmogrified – destroyed all my memories of what I learned from her when I was a child visiting her in Oaxaca. These had been junked ... pushed callously back into the forgotten recesses of my educated mind. Clearly, as an educated activist and intellectual, my grandmother's *Zapoteco* world was not something to keep alive in my conscience, my awareness of the modern reality. After abandoning the development lenses, those memories helped to re-member my self with my people, at the grassroots.

Still, I remained very confused. With Teodor Shanin as a guide and guru, I participated in the 70s in a national and international debate on peasantry. I had already abandoned my Leninist eyes, and without the compass orientation of development, I was completely confused about alternatives to the dominant development paradigm—the highways to universal progress-growth-expansion. All socialist countries had adopted the development catechism. How to conceive the revolutionary transformation of injustice and inequality without development? I already knew that the peasants and common women and men at the grassroots were not interested in development and were resisting all kinds of developments; they were looking for autonomy and avoided any political and ideological center. (After listening to them, the name of my organization changed from Analysis, Development and *Gestión* to Autonomy, Decentralism and *Gestión*). But I could not shake off my confusions. I was still assuming that the economic society was a given, a fact, a reality; that we were resisting capitalism, not the industrial mode of production; that the nation-state and formal democracy were still appropriate political horizons; and so on and so forth.

Ivan, from the very first minute, revealed what I would come to call “the discourse of the people,” a brilliant articulation of people's perception and reactions in the time of crises. “Conviviality” and “vernacular,” fundamental categories in Ivan's thinking, I had already discovered—NOT in the world of academics or within my

intellectual research. Instead, working at the grassroots, I had had direct experience of the concepts I was discovering with Ivan. He wrote that he took “conviviality” from Brillat-Savarin, but I am convinced that he also heard the word at the grassroots in Mexico. Since then, whenever I use Ivan’s ideas or concepts in my grassroots worlds, I enjoy an immediate “Aha” effect. “Aha,” say the people, as if they already knew those ideas but had been unable to articulate them in Ivan’s way.

Yes, Ivan’s ideas became a very powerful light to illuminate my reality and my grassroots pathways. I started to collaborate with him. Soon we became friends. He invited me to his homes in Mexico and State College, among other things to write the lead essay for the dictionary of toxic words, edited by Wolfgang Sachs.³ By the way, as Ivan clearly anticipated, there is today new interest in the book; we will have meetings and publications on its 25th anniversary, in 2017.

We know that “interculturality” was important for Ivan. Do you know how his interest in the fundamentals of interculturality became important in his life and work?

My sense from hearing his stories is that it started with the cultural context in which he was born and which defined his childhood. He was a polyglot before he was eight years old. Very early in life he was immersed in radically different worlds—from the “civilized” Vienna, soon to fall under Nazi control, to the Croatian island where his grandfather was living. David Cayley narrates, I think, that the same boat which carried him as an infant from his ancestral home in Dalmatia also brought the first loudspeaker that would inevitably change not only Illich’s island, but the rest of his life. His childhood evidently posed his earliest intercultural challenges, starting with his parents: his mother a converted Sephardic Jew, his father a Croatian Catholic aristocrat.

The first major challenge was to come later in Nazi Vienna. Identified as a Jew, he was immediately humiliated in the classrooms. When he was 13 years old he took the decision of not birthing another child in this terrible world. He was to become a Catholic priest. He went to Rome where his genius was quickly established. He was offered a

³ *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, London: Zed Books, 1992.

brilliant career in the Vatican, which he escaped leaving for New York immediately. During his training for priesthood, the discipline he loved the most was ecclesiology and he became particularly interested in Albertus Magnus, whose manuscripts were in Princeton. Ivan yearned to continue his studies on Magnus, immersing himself in theory and scholarship. The world stretching wildly beyond academia, however, pulled his scholarship into the complex realities of interculturality.

Under the protective umbrella of Cardinal Spellman, he tumbled into the mayhem of Harlem. Soon after arriving in New York, serendipitously he crossed a church attended by Puerto Ricans. Entering the church to pray, he witnessed the horror, the indignities suffered by poor *jibaritos* in the hands of American priests considered gentle. Shaken up, the very next day he requested from Cardinal Spellman to minister to church newcomers. Immediately, he began practicing as a priest. People still remember his amazing transformation when he was conducting the mass or the sacraments, fully immersed in the sacred mystery. He began changing every aspect of the rituals of mass, long before Vatican II. He was courageously adapting the universality of the Church's message to the particularity of the *jibaritos*' faith and culture and reality in New York. As we all know, *catholic* means *universal*. But for Ivan, love can never be universal nor abstract. And for Illich there was nothing more important in the Christian message than love.

After some time, he was appointed as Vice-Rector of the Catholic Ponce University of Puerto Rico. Some old people in New York still remember his last mass in his first parish, when 30,000 *jibaritos* participated in the ceremony. *That* is Ivan. That gives a glimpse of his life long journey practicing interculturality. The same episodes transformed the amazing scholar Ivan into the man of action, one whose actions and theories belonged to the same fabric of his social thought. I am continually surprised and frustrated when I see Ivan treated and applauded and celebrated as the great erudite theoretician, the supreme scholar, that he in fact was. Sadly, his admirers are blind to how his erudition, research, his impressive knowledge of language and history and philosophy and everything he wrote or spoke about was always at the service of his commitment to the real world ... his strong desire to participate in the transformation of this world, here, now, not in the future which he refused to be tantalized by... procrastinating the present to the future of abstract ideals.

In Puerto Rico, he really engaged with the people, instead of isolating himself in an office or within the ivory tower. It is hard to imagine Ivan in a monoplane flying to reach isolated *aldeas* (hamlets). Ivan wrote in *Deschooling Society* that he owed his interest in public education to Everett Reimer, who he met in 1958 in Puerto Rico. (Later, in CIDOC, since 1967, he met regularly with him and with many others.)

To further explore Latin American cultures, Ivan went to Brazil, where he met Dom Helder Câmara, who was ready to “educate” him. He gave Ivan a book and then the next day arranged for a meeting with the author. That is how he met for the first time with Paulo Freire. As Ivan told David Cayley, they became instantly friends, and remained friends for the rest of Freire’s life, in spite of the fact that they parted ways philosophically and oriented their lives in entirely different paths. Both of them had a profound interest in social transformation. While Freire was interested in educational reform and particularly literacy for emancipation, and oriented his life and work to equip a group of “mediators” to support the people in their emancipatory process, Ivan was interested, first, in answering the fundamental question: What kind of society wants to educate all its members?, and then, once he suspected the answer, he wanted to change that society, the contemporary, economic society, capitalist or socialist. *Deschooling Society* is not really against the school or even against the “banking education” theorized and criticized by Freire. Ivan uses the analogy of the separation of Church and State, as precondition for the democratic societies, to claim for the separation of Education and State. People in the left postulate exactly the opposite: they claim for the universal right of education, for lay, free and public education and attribute that fundamental social function to the state, no matter what they conceive as “State.” People in the right seem to look the same than Ivan—they want to privatize education and suppress any intervention of the state in what they want to control, although most of them will accept public resources for the schools. Ivan opens a different path, or rather paths, which cannot be classified in such positions. He is looking for the freedom to learn, he is resisting capitalist or socialist state plans to educate all the members of the society according with specific interests. His reference to Comenius is very clear: in conceiving modern education, Comenius was literally trying to create his country, in a fragmented way and under several empires. Comenius’ effort can be examined in the frame of national

independence, but the tradition of education is no longer about independence, but about domination and control.

Dom Helder Câmara, very well known for his profound commitment to social and political transformation and particularly the poor, had another suggestion for Ivan: “If you want to know Latin America, you must walk it.” Obediently, Ivan walked. I don’t know how many miles he walked in Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Chile and of course Mexico. Years later, Grimaldo Rengifo, a Peruvian guy that was one of the Latin-American socialists who participated in Ivan’s seminar at CIDOC that generated *Tools for Conviviality*, asked Ivan about what to do during the month he still had to stay in Mexico: “Walk Mexico,” he told him. And Grimaldo dutifully followed the advice and walked from Cuernavaca to Oaxaca and Chiapas.

Given this background, Ivan was the obvious candidate to educate the nuns and priests going to Latin America, according to the agreement between the Pope and President Kennedy, to send to Latin America 10% of the priests and nuns of North America, around 40 000 people. He first created, in Fordham University, the Center for Intercultural Formation, and later, in Cuernavaca, CIDOC, the Center for Intercultural Documentation. All this is well known. I am bringing it here only to underline Ivan’s concern with interculturality, something that had many other expressions in his complex life, for example, learning so many languages.

At one point, Ivan told me, for some time I was thinking to go to China and spend the rest of my life in a little village. I wanted to take a radical distance from my condition as a Westerner, from all the certainties and “evidences” assumed and presupposed by a person like me. But it was immediately evident that such a move was stupid ... I would be the Westerner Illich in the small Chinese village, no matter how well I learned the Chinese language or ways of life, or how well I related with the Chinese people. And that is how I decided instead to go backwards in Western history, trying to identify the moment in history in which every one of our certainties were impossible to understand, in order to discover how and why they were conceived. In my view, that was his main motivation to become a historian, beyond his original interest in ecclesiology.

I am sharing these stories only to underline that, in my view, Ivan was fully aware that the relation between cultures had already been tragic and will continue to create

increasing violence and confrontation. In the last years of his life he was fully aware of what was happening in Yugoslavia, in the region so close to his heart, with the series of events that produced what now is called “the Yugoslavian syndrome”—when people of different cultures that have been neighbors for centuries begin to kill each other, a kind of syndrome that seems to be today epidemic.

There is something more and more profound. During the last decades of his very rich life, Ivan used frequently the dictum: *corruption optimi quae est pessima* (the corruption of the best is the worst) and even more the parable of the Good Samaritan. For him, the parable was the quintessential element of Christ’s message: that a person, out of love, trespasses the limits of his own *ethnos*, his culture. This is the message, he said time and again, a message of love for the other, particularly when this other belongs to another *ethnos*. For Ivan, when Christ is asked “who is your neighbor?”, his answer, the very explicit message is, your neighbor is the person that you transform into your neighbor by loving him or her. For Ivan, this is the best (of the Christian message) and it has been corrupted when the Church has institutionalized love and transmogrified it into help, aid, charity, care, a professional service, what John McNight calls “the mask of love.”

You just said that Ivan is for you a man of action, someone who wants to participate in social and political transformation. Was he looking for power?

He knew very well what power is and does and he could have had a lot of power, first within the Catholic Church, when he was offered a very important position in the Vatican, and later in the secular world, given his connections, his fame, his genius. He knew, for example, how to use the media. At one point he was able to publish the same article, in a certain date, in the ten most important newspapers of the world, including *Le Monde*, *the New York Times*, *the Washington Post*, *Asahi Shinbun*, etc. Or he knew how to use the power of the government. For example, he made a series of calls to get Paulo Freire out of jail and succeeded. But he abhorred power, precisely because he knew what it means. He knew that power corrupts its user and he also knew that power becomes counterproductive if you want to use it for freedom and emancipation. He escaped the

limelight to reflect aloud with conspirators and friends and he explicitly avoided the kind of writing that would transform him into an overnight superstar. At the end of *Tools for Conviviality* you can find some pages that can be taken as a magnificent guide to act in times of crisis, with brilliant and imaginative suggestions. But he was not offering a guideline, an instruction, a political proposal to follow. As in many other cases, he was anticipating how the people would react in the time of a crisis. That is why those pages can be seen today as a very good description of what the people are doing now, everywhere, when the institutions are collapsing exactly in the way Ivan anticipated. In his conversations with Cayley⁴ you can see—Ivan mentions that at one point he anticipated something like a sudden collapse of Wall Street, but what was happening instead is that millions of people were re-functionalizing the institutions, by using them in their way, not the prescribed way, in the time of their collapse. This was not a prescription, a design, a model. In the last years of his very productive life, Ivan was observing that we were evolving from the era of tools to the era of systems, that we were becoming subsystems of the system. A tool is something you use according to your intention. The system is no longer a tool: it cannot obey you! I do still belong to the generation that becomes irritated when MS Word does not allow me to do what I want and it auto-corrects me. The best example is, of course, transportation. When I use an automobile I am no longer auto-mobile, I am part of a very complex system, that includes the streets and roads, traffic signals, car factories, gasoline, etc. The “system” is imposing on us all kinds of attitudes and behavior and is becoming counterproductive. They are not falling apart as a collapse of Wall Street, but they are in the process of collapse. Many people are not waiting for that final collapse of all modern institutions, but “misusing” them, for their own purposes, transforming them into tools again. Ivan himself misused the universities for his own purposes, in his seminars. More and more people are misusing the education system, to be able to learn in freedom. Others are resisting the medical dictatorship, using modern technologies for their own purposes. In the Zapatista clinics you can find X-Rays and ultrasound and even some antibiotics; but you will not find the medical system in operation. That is why even non-Zapatistas come to the Zapatista clinics. They consider that they are a lot better than public or private clinics.

⁴ David Cayley, *Ivan Illich In Conversation*, Toronto: Anansi Press, 1992, p. 117.

Ivan once explained to me how and why he opted for influence instead of power. It is not as easy as it looks, but the central point is crystal clear: to carefully avoid control, domination, hierarchy, oppression—in every possible aspect of the reality. He explained many times how a microphone is a tool of power; he tried to avoid using it as much as he could. He refused to be in command, even in conversations in small groups. He did not have much patience and he could use all the power his figure represented for most people to silence arrogance or dismiss assaninity—the participation of some people that, in his opinion, were affecting the flow of the conversation.

He had in fact an immense influence on millions of people, sharing with them ideas, experiences, the collective outcome of his seminars. But he never transformed that influence into a tool of power to dominate or control. Yes, he had a profound commitment to social and political change, he fought courageously and continuously against the degradation of the human condition he saw in every aspect of the contemporary society. But he refused to become a leader, or even less a boss, to guide the masses to any kind of Promised Land.

In my view, his continual refusal to offer specific “alternatives,” to formulate utopian designs, or to offer specific advice, had many reasons. The most important is that he anticipated many different forms of the new society, many paths and ways of life, not only one. He fully acknowledged the radical plurality of the world. I think that he considered it inappropriate to share his own dreams or preferences about possible futures because he was aware that his influence, out of the intrinsic power of his ideas, would have coerced some people to “follow” him instead of appealing to their own imagination. Perhaps he shared with Marx the conviction that any person conceiving the shape of the society after the revolution would be a reactionary. And he said time and again that he did not want for the shadow of the future to affect his perceptions of the present. He could express a very clear conviction, for example at the end of *Gender*, that it is possible to recover a contemporary art of living, if we can avoid sentimentality and be open to surprise beyond the genderless economic individual. But he did not offer specific clues about that art.

Really? Do you think that he did not offer suggestions and proposals about the alternatives, beyond the society he criticized so well? What is the relevance of his life and thinking for our current predicaments?

He offered some examples about alternative paths in many areas. At the end of *Deschooling Society*, for example, he described some of them. And he also mentioned that many people were doing certain things to go beyond the contemporary predicaments; this is particularly clear at the end of *Tools for Conviviality*. But all these were only, in my view, illustrations of those paths to present his ideas as something fully incarnated in reality, not just abstract elaborations. It was not to define specific paths as the best way to transform into behavior a radical critique of conventional ways of thinking and doing.

I have been saying, for a long time now, that the three pillars of alternative paths are hope, friendship and surprise. I find this “formula,” openly inspired by Ivan, very effective to share his approach to this moment of danger and crisis. In “The Rebirth of Epimethean Man,” that extraordinary essay at the end of *Deschooling Society*—that in my view functions better separated from the book—Ivan clearly expresses that the recovery of hope as a social force is a condition for the survival of the human species. He establishes in that essay a clear distinction between hope and expectation and delineates a line of thinking and action that many years later was beautifully expressed by Vaclav Havel: “Hope is not the conviction that something will happen, but the conviction that something makes sense, whatever happens.” Apparently, he (Ivan) liked for this purpose some of my stories, for example about pregnancy. In my world, “*Está esperando*,” they say about a pregnant woman; she is hoping. It would be terrible, very bad taste, to talk about the baby. The woman knows that many things can happen before the baby she is hoping for really is born. It is a kind of challenge, a dare, to the gods to “expect” the baby. In the time when ultrasound started to be used, I got a card from a friend. In the left side it had a kind of shadow; in the right part, it was: “Hi. I am Johnny. I will be born on August 3, at 10:00 in the morning.” The mother was dutifully following the medical program, which will end in a C-section prescribed by her doctor, and she was “expecting” Johnny. In these times of great despair, given the terrible conditions of the world, what we see is the recovery of hope as a social force, not a construction of new expectations.

When the occupiers of Wall Street were asked what were their demands, they answered that they had no demands because they could not hope that they were satisfied by a regime dedicated to serve the 1%. They were explicitly rejecting any form of expectation, fully aware that they were driven to frustration and near despair, but they were not paralyzed. They were nourishing hope, the hope that comes when something makes sense.

Many people in the United States have started to become “occupiers,” basically concerned with local threats and transformations. In these times of global fear, said the Uruguayan poet Eduardo Galeano, those who are not afraid of hunger are afraid of eating. It would be foolish to expect that the governments or Wal-Mart and Monsanto will have a moral epiphany and will begin any time soon to do the opposite of what they are doing. *Via Campesina*, the biggest peasant organization in history, took the matter into its own hands. They redefined food sovereignty, saying that we must define by ourselves what to eat and we must produce it. And that is what they and many other people are doing everywhere. Today, small farmers, mainly women, feed 70% of the people in Earth, while agribusiness, controlling more than half of the food resources, feed only 30%. When a peasant sows seed on the prescribed day, he is not expecting the crop—he or she knows that many things may happen. But he does what makes sense that very day. I have a thousand stories of this kind, that clearly apply to what is happening today in my world and everywhere. Hope is the very essence of popular movements. People are mobilized because they believe that their action may produce the change they want. As Ivan wrote, we need to bring back hope as a social force – and that is, by the way, the main contribution of the Zapatistas.

Friendship is for me the main category in the life and thinking of Ivan, the category that most defines his position about the world. That is my sin, he said many times: *poliphilia*. And he knew how to be a friend. He cancelled once all his seminars and lectures in State College and took a flight to Switzerland. An old woman, Ivan’s friend, was dying and wanted to see him before dying. He stayed with her for 20 days, until she died. Gabriel Cámara used to say: if you are a friend of Ivan, you need to have your luggage ready, because he may call you at any time to meet with someone in another country. I can remember very well how I went to Germany to meet with Teodor Shanin

and Claudia von Werlhof, after Ivan urged me to take immediately a flight. I cannot thank him enough for the many friends he shared with me and I can tell a thousand stories about the meaning of friendship in his personal life. Perhaps the most important point to remember is that the stuff allowing us, those who had been constructed as individuals, to create and regenerate commons, community spirit, in the urban world, is friendship, with its characteristic component of gratuity.

Surprise expresses for me the position according to which we are back from the future, that we are explicitly abandoning the construction of the future as a tool of manipulation and control. Yes, I can agree with Galeano, when he tells us that the utopia is what makes us walk the next step, but never be there. But I cannot agree with the contemporary construction of utopias and utopian thinking, Wallerstein style, to renovate the death utopias of the twentieth century.

Yes, this is the time of Illich, that is, this is our time with him. I cannot conceive of a more powerful and effective light to illuminate these very dark times and then be able to understand the horror. He can be a good guide to understand the general trends and also of the rise of Mr. Trump or Brexit. Ivan offers great clues to dissolve the veils covering, hiding what is before our eyes but we cannot see. On the one hand, we don't see how small acts, daily acts of ordinary men and women, are constructing the new society in the womb of the old. These are revolutionary acts, as Ivan defined them. "I call an act 'revolutionary'," wrote Ivan, "only when its appearance within a culture establishes irrevocably a (significantly) new possibility: a trespass of cultural boundaries which beats a new path. A revolutionary act is the unexpected proof of a new social fact, which might have been foretold, expected, or even called for but never before was irrevocably shown as possible."⁵ These revolutionary acts don't belong to the old revolution, 20th century style, but to the ongoing revolution, undermining the system oppressing us. Instead of the fear used by Trump to get support for an authoritarian and nationalistic way, entirely obsolete but very dangerous, we need to open minds and hearts to the ocean of hope we can find in the behavior of millions of ordinary people. Instead of being intimidated and paralyzed when you loose your job, the intimidation and paralyses

⁵ In "Appendix: Dissidence, Deviance and Delinquency in Style." CIDOC Cuaderno No. 54, Cuernavaca, 1970, pp. 8/1-8/9

that you see in the faces of many Trump followers who have the expectation that he will magically solve all of their problems, you can enjoy the freedom of a third of Americans who are now abandoning the 9 to 5 prison, as the Fall 2016 issue of *Yes!*⁶ celebrates.

Ivan can help us to understand people's mobilizations in Oaxaca or New York. Oaxaca is burning. We have something that can be legitimately called a popular insurrection, very traditional and totally new, a real novelty where the people are looking for self-affirmation, autonomy, freedom, not for conventional demands, while being affected and stimulated by brutal repression and impressive incompetence of the government and the powers that be. From the sediment of experience and many struggles, new forms of lucidity and courage are emerging. Among them, one very special demand: the disestablishment of education, as Ivan suggested—that the government should be excluded from any definition of the content and forms and methods to learn in freedom. This is not coming from any ivory tower or academic prescription, but from the depth of the experience of long struggle, lead by the well organized teachers and joined by the parents and the teachers. People are clearly adopting political horizons that go beyond the nation-state and representative democracy, the political horizon that Ivan had in his mind during the last 50 years of his productive life.

And Ivan can also help us to understand why Occupy Wall Street was possible, why it produced such an impact in the minds, hearts and behavior and the hopes of millions of people as well as what follows, what is embedded in that moment of lucid courage. Reading Ivan today is lighting a powerful lantern in the darkness. His light illuminates the current reality, and allows us to better understand what is happening, both the institutional collapse and people's reactions, and even more to see the paths ahead. Ivan cleans our eyes, eliminating from them the old, conventional, obsolete ideas in which we have been educated and shaped, thus enabling us to use our own eyes, in our own way.

Yes, with Ivan we can understand what is happening, how the people are reacting and what kind of awareness we need today before the horrors of our modern times. The most important thing, perhaps, is that Ivan gave us back the agency we lost in the

⁶ See *Yes! Magazine*, Issue 79, Fall 2016, "The Vanishing 9-To-5: Welcome to the Gig Economy: Ruthless and Liberating."

confusion of all leftist preaching about masses and parties and the national/global scale of the needed change. Ivan reinstated our agency, our personal capacity to act (with friends), by giving us back the sense of proportion, the sense we lost in the hubris of modernity and the patriarchal arrogance that brought us to the extremes of violence we are living today.

This is the time to recover the art of living and dying, a contemporary art of living and dying, beyond any form of nostalgia, paralysis or despair. And that is quintessential Ivan.

The Essential Nature of Cigarette Stubs

Shirley R. Steinberg

Indeed it was Paulo Freire's death which caused me to interrogate myths around the dissolution of the illustrious friendship between Freire and Ivan Illich. While compiling a homage to Freire through vignettes, poetry, and short notes, I considered inviting Illich to contribute.

The celebrious alliance emanating from kindred ideologies had been the subject of a rumored rift which occurred sometime between the early 60s (when Illich attempted to have Freire released from jail, and also hosted the ex-prisoner at the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Documentation), and the mid 70s, (after publication of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Illich's *Deschooling Society*).

A novice to the intricacies of social theoretical personal entanglements (friendships? enmeshments? associations?), I was loathe to step into a potential quagmire. On the one hand, Illich and Freire's friendship had been celebrated, and on the other, the reputed feud was legendary.

Death can cause outlandish and exaggerated thought processes. My respect for Illich (and the fact that I lived in his former home in State College, PA) captivated my desire to *do the right thing*, but there wasn't a reference or template covering my query. Freire's *compañeras*, *compañeros* and family were not particularly impressed with my dilemma.

In this case, my geographical placement at Illich's quasi academic home, Penn State, proved fortuitous, so I contacted an acquaintance who had worked closely with Illich. The feud hadn't been fabled enough to have reached him, and he was able to get a message to Illich about Paulo's death.

After having had time to reflect in jail, Paulo Freire came to Cuernavaca, to be for a while our guest at CIDOC. That's when he finished and Valentina Borremans published his first book outside Brasil. That's where an acquaintance made in 1961 grew into a friendship.

A few years later when Paulo had found a niche at the World Council of Churches, I went to Geneva for a few days. Paulo was waiting for me at the airport, behind a customs barrier. I still see his hair that had bleached, his open plaid shirt and the disheveled bundle of papers under his arm. We embraced with that northeastern light caress of the fingertips on the other's back, and then holding each other by the shoulders locked gaze.

"Como vay, Paulo?" He waited with his reply until we had stepped from the sidewalk outside the terminal. There he stopped. He looked intensely at the gutter, then into my eyes, and then pointed to the gutter and said: "Look. When I came in, there were cigarette stubs, one butt here, one over there. They have already been found and removed. Tell me Ivan, how can you be at home in a place as clean as that?"

--Ivan Illich (1997)

We have no time for personal feuds...the plethora of public hostilities and tragedies can occupy us. Like Illich, we continue on to interrogate the existence of clean gutters.

Illich, I. (1997). Personal communication with S. Steinberg.

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Automobility and Hospitality

Oscar Krüger and Corinna Burkhart

Introduction

And which driver is not tempted, merely by the power of his
engine, to wipe out the vermin of the street, pedestrians,
children and cyclists?

- Theodor Adorno

This paper returns to a theme that has received much attention in commentary on the thinking of Ivan Illich: his elaboration on the story of the Samaritan. (e.g. Taylor, 2007; Bruno-Jofré and Zaldivar, 2012; Perelli, 2015) Far too little attention has been accorded to one crucial element of that story, namely the *road* where it takes place. Following upon Illich's claim that "the love of friendship, *philia*, as practicable under the social and symbolic conditions engendered by modern artifacts, has been the constant subject of my teaching" (Illich, 1996, p. 6), our question is how these conditions are put at stake in the modern system of automobility. Our claim, insofar as unexpected meetings between strangers are the concern, is that they are largely eliminated from what is likely to occur in the course of the everyday movements of people in so called modern societies. We then explore how a remnant of such hospitality remains in the form of hitch-hiking. Looking closer at the conditions required for successful hitch-hiking only strengthens the argument that the conditions for unexpected encounters along the road have been marginalized. We conclude with a brief discussion which suggests that the imminent arrival of the self-driving car may mark the transition from what Illich called the "age of tools" to the "age of systems."

In this transition, even the hospitable remnant of hitch-hiking stands in danger of final extermination.

Automobility and Forms of Critique

In this section, we provide conceptual elaboration by defining what we mean by “automobility” and we discuss two different means of scrutinizing this phenomenon offered by the work of Illich. Automobility, to begin with, is understood in the sense used by sociologist John Urry: “a self-organizing autopoietic, non-linear system that spreads world-wide, and includes cars, car-drivers, roads, petroleum supplies and many novel objects, technologies and signs.” (Urry, 2004, p. 27) This system, it has been argued, has come to exercise a radical monopoly on wayfaring. That is, the desire to move has been molded into the desire—even need—to make use of the particular product which is the car. (Illich, 1974, p. 45) The car’s apparent self-mobility would thus here be regarded as made possible only within a larger system, which operates through a specific domain characterized by its own spatial and temporal structures. (Urry, 2004, 29). Now, if the triumph of this domain may appear an inevitable outcome of technological development, it is worth noting how its emergence was highly contested. As Wolfgang Sachs shows, “[t]he automobile delivered the power to overcome distances, but not the path.” (Sachs, 1992, p.83). Those paths which preceded automobility were winding, uneven, cluttered and primarily fit for moving between neighboring towns by foot or bicycle. (Ibid, p. 45) Inevitably, as the domain of the car was expanding, this led to great conflicts between those moving by such older means, and those making use of the new machine. In particular, the remodeling of space into the straight and linear thoroughfares that fit the car met great popular resistance. (Ibid, pp. 12-22) The conditions that allowed

automobility to triumph were thus not related to any inevitable progress. Instead, the condition was the ability of political claims made in the name of systemic needs to trump those claims which invoked the habits of vernacular communities. Even in an iconic car-nation such as Germany, the political debate on automobility was settled only once its proponents realized they could claim that this system was needed for the prosperity of the national industry. (Ibid, p. 24).

By now, much of the earth has been transformed to fit the needs of this system. Once we no longer take this development for granted, it becomes possible to scrutinize the significance of it having done so. How are we then to take its measure? The works of Ivan Illich offer two possibilities. The first possibility can be adopted from his earlier work, for example, *Energy and Equity*. In doing so, we would seek to bring out the hidden counterproductivity which is the real cost of a car's speed. This could be done by attending to things such as the increasing time that persons are expected to spend travelling, or the time required for keeping both the car and its system operational. This sort of scrutiny can be very valuable, such as demonstrated by Alf Hornborg's (2001) more recent critique of the false "time-saving" promises of technology. It may also render clear and succinct conclusions: "free people must travel the road to productive social relations at the speed of a bicycle." (Illich, 1974, p. 12) This is not what we do in this paper.

Illich himself came to reject the approach which allows the kind of critique found in *Energy and Equity*. (Cayley, 1992, p. 112) Essentially, this earlier critique shows us what tools really do. But it does so without asking if the language which articulates this reality may itself not be determined by that tool, and if that would mean that the critique itself is constrained by its grasp. Indeed, a large part of the appeal exercised by these early works is that they are easily graspable, which they are

by making use of the same conventional measures of time or space upon which the proponents of (e.g.) automobility formulate their promises. This does not challenge the more fundamental issue regarding whether the terms are the appropriate ones for understanding it. If we were instead to approach a thing such as making highways from the later period of Illich's thinking, doing so could be read as a process in which the “bulldozer [...] incorporates discrete vernacular space *sui generis* into non-discrete, in-discreet, homogeneous, commercial space.” (Illich 1985, pp. 20-21) The concern here is with the *qualitative* transformation of space (and time) itself. In regards to automobility, then, we now find him reflecting on how

[L]ocomotion is a very modern concept. People have walked in all societies, but they had no way of moving through a three-dimensional Cartesian space. It didn't exist [...] The prevalence of wheels says that I am engaging in locomotion when I walk [...] Thinking of myself as engaging in locomotion places me in Cartesian space; and by placing myself in Cartesian space, I limit my experience, and my sense of reality, to Cartesian space [...] It is my duty *not* to be constrained into three-dimensional space [...] What would happen to me there? I would lose the interiority of my heart. (Illich in Cayley, 1992, pp.113-114)

Automobility is connected to a new kind of space, and placing ourselves in it transforms who we are. The strategy of critique would now be one of revealing what these qualities are, and the difference they make. Thus, what is this space which Illich here calls “Cartesian,” and what difference does it make? Whereas the name designating it invokes Descartes, this philosopher formalized earlier developments having taken place in Renaissance Italy: the invention of the artistic technique known as *linear perspective*. (See Illich, 1995; Hoff, 2013) The novelty invented there made use of a frame, positioned between the painter and the thing to be depicted. This thing can then be decomposed into geometrically defined sections. Subsequently, the frame and the straight line came to define what we understand by “space.” That is, as an

abstract grid completely neutral in regards to whatever comes to occupy it. As Illich puts it—a “space without quality.” (Illich, 1985, p. 62)

This kind of space makes a difference. On one side, any spatial being can now be exhausted as such by mathematical definition, which affords the subject unparalleled precision and control over the things that it can now univocally define. On the other hand, as we found Illich to claim, it provides no place for the heart's interior. Why is that? Whereas the icon of old “was not yet a place *in* which to see things but *through* which to see them” (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 117), the image of the frame is a representation. Linear perspective is created so to designate a correct position for the one who gazes upon the image, and this position is fixed and external to the representation. The perceiver does not participate in the image, and its position is that of the Cartesian “subject,” who is the bearer of all that meaning and interpretation which the worldly space of pure quantity is unable to open towards on its own accord. And this has consequences for the range of possible relations that this subject may now maintain towards its world. According to theologian Johannes Hoff, who traces Cartesian space to the same origin as did Illich, the space of such perspective lacks the possibility to “create an *actual* space of *face-to-face encounter* [whereby it] reduce[s] my ability to perceive embodied individuals as persons to my ability to put myself in the place of their mirror-image.” (Hoff, 2013, p. 95) Inter-human relations, then, would only now become that which we know as “intersubjective”—that is, as if consisting in an ability to put oneself in one subjective, external and “narcissistic” perspective after another. (Ibid, p. 104)

This change in perception must be a great danger to those who share, to some extent, Illich's belief in an Incarnation which “invites me to seek the face of God in the face of everybody whom I encounter” (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p.110) through a

mode of “seeing [which] was once felt to be an act of bodily intercourse with the object of my gaze.” (Ibid, p. 107) As a foundation for scrutiny of a system such as automobility, this manner of drawing out such hidden structural elements and their significance is more challenging than the earlier critique employed by Illich in that it doesn't let us grasp a phenomenon as much as it undoes the grasp by which it is held fast. It also has a tendency to remain very abstract, such as in the discussion of space we conduct above. In the following section, we make this later kind of scrutiny of the modern world more concrete by focusing it on one of its components – the system of automobility.

Automobility and Its Aspects

In this section, we conduct an inquiry into what automobility tells us about movement, then how it transforms the experience of moving, before concluding with a discussion on how Illich would lead us to consider the possibilities of human becoming which may close with this change.

In regards to the first question, we can adopt a distinction introduced by anthropologist Tim Ingold between thinking journeying as transport, and thinking it as wayfaring. For the latter, movement is a continuous process of generation, sustained by attentive engagement with changing surroundings. The wayfarer “has no final destination, for wherever he is, and so long as life goes on, there is somewhere further he can go.” (Ingold, 2011, p. 150) Transport, by contrast, is what movement is when we understand the space it moves through in the Cartesian terms introduced in the preceding section. The meaning of the movement, and the reason it takes place at all, is bestowed onto it from the point at its end. Consequently, the places traversed

become but distances to cross as efficiently as possible – ideally, instantaneously. (Ibid, p. 152) The latter is the perspective assumed by the German architects of their nation's famous highway system, which they designed by deliberations on how to connect major points, cities, along as straight and efficient lines as possible. (Sachs, 1992, p. 46)

This was not only the case for the Germans, and the spread of automobility also realizes the kind of space implied in this vision. The result is not merely a change in regards to conceptions *about* space, but something which also transforms the experience of moving through it. As Urry notes, automobility changes “what can be seen, heard, smelt and tasted.” (Urry, 2004, p. 30) According to Ingold,

... modern metropolitan societies [...] have created transport systems that span the globe in a vast network of destination-to-destination connections. And they have converted travel from an experience of movement in which action and perception are intimately coupled into one of enforced immobility and sensory deprivation. The passenger, strapped in his seat, no longer has the ‘all around’ perception of a land that stretches without interruption from the ground beneath his feet towards the horizon. It rather appears as so much scenery projected onto vertical screens, more or less distant, that seem to slide past one another. (Ingold, 2011, p. 152)

In the context of a discussion on the iatrogenic (doctor-generated, see below) body, Ivan Illich remarks in a similar vein that “you need such a body to take the car, jumping kangaroo-like from place to place, without touching the earth.” (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 131) The connection here is that between the body and the earth, the question is what *kind* of earth and body these are. For Illich, the earth is not the globe as made visible in Cartesian space, gazed upon from afar. It is “something you have to use all your senses to grasp, to feel. Earth is something that you can smell, that you can taste”. (Illich in Cayley, 1992, p. 287) That is, something we relate to through carnal participation. This earth is not the space traversed by the car. As for the body,

the term “iatrogenic” serves to historicize our bodily conceptions and perceptions along a line where the evaluations and measurements and diagrams of medical science have come to serve the basis not only of our conceptual understanding of ourselves, but our very *sense* of ourselves. The diagram takes the place of the felt flesh. Illich's belief is that the body as flesh has been increasingly marginalized, such as seen when he reads the history of the gaze as a gradual *disembodiment*. (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 108)

The common theme here is the estrangement of the world and the body as experienced through the carnal senses. As the body goes from something which travels by wayfaring through the earth to something which is transported across its surface¹, the character of experience goes through a disembodiment. There are many reasons for which one might believe that this matters, but Illich's work leads us towards one issue above others. Our senses open us towards certain kinds of experience. The kind of experience which Illich held the body *in particular* to open towards was that which finally answers the third question we posed for this section: how does it change the range of possibilities for humans to be?

The answer comes through Illich's elaboration on what is the proper way for humans to *be*, which we find in his interpretation of the parable of the Samaritan. In Illich's interpretation of this story, he says “that your *telos*, your end purpose, the goal of your being, is an other whom you freely choose.” (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 197) His elaboration of this story has received extensive attention elsewhere (ref. initial page), but it is still helpful to recapitulate a few points. What the story tells is the event when a Samaritan turned to care for a Jew lying wounded by the side of the road. The pain of the Jew constituted a call, and in defiance of traditional boundaries,

¹ For the claim that wayfaring moves *through* the world rather than across it, see Ingold. (2011, p.151)

the Samaritan responded. What Illich developed was a novel interpretation of this well-known event. Whereas it is often understood as telling us how to treat our neighbor, this was not the actual question that the story was originally told as an answer to. Rather, the question inquired into *who* the neighbor is. In this case, the point of the story would be exactly that the Samaritan story does not answer this by recourse to inherited duty or prescribed law. The decision he makes is *beyond* any law, and the relation established through his act is a unique relation between one person and another. Once this possibility had been introduced into the world, according to Illich, it “is open to anyone who walks down that road to move away from the road and establish a relationship, a fit, a tie, with the man who is beaten up.” (Ibid, p. 206) But the call and response which creates this relation moves through a certain medium: the body.

According to Illich, the New Testament brought about not only a new way of conceiving the world, but also of *perceiving* it. (Ibid, p. 106) In the Incarnation, the Word became flesh, which lifted this flesh out of the ancient denigration it had suffered in favor of the abstract *logos*. This flesh is the condition of possibility for the unprecedented kind of relation told of in the story of the Samaritan, and if you “[t]ake away the fleshy, bodily, carnal, dense, humoral experience of self, and therefore of the Thou, from the story of the Samaritan, you have a nice liberal fantasy, which is something horrible.” (Ibid, p. 207) The sight of the wounded Jew struck the Samaritan in his *belly*. (Ibid, p. 227) No such belly, then no such meeting. Through the entrails goes the connection wherein the invitation is received to seek the face of God in the face of those who we encounter. Compare this to how, in automobility, “[t]here is no reciprocity of the eye and no look is returned from the ‘ghost in the machine’ . Communities of people become anonymized flows of faceless ghostly machines.”

(Urry, 2004, p. 30)

Elaborating upon Illich's work, Jesse Perillo points out that “[w]hen 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.” (Perillo, 2015, p. 55) In doing so, insofar as we follow Illich in thinking it, the built world of automobility would eradicate from its domain the very *telos* of human life. The possibility may remain open to anyone who *walks* down that road. Less so for the one who drives it. Human beings are wayfarers, but as the ways along which they travel are increasingly incorporated into such a system, the conditions where the Samaritan could encounter the Jew are increasingly scarce. Now, approaching automobility in this fashion renders a very different kind of critique than that found in (e.g.) *Energy and Equity*. It may be harder to grasp, but it is also more profound. Whether it may somehow lead to another way of travel, or if it will remain an elegy remains to be seen.² In the following, we turn to the question of how complete the transformations of the world by the system of automobility have been.

Hitch-Hiking

In the preceding sections, we have explored the characteristics of automobility. How complete is the transformation brought to the world through this system? Illich himself insisted that the “[t]ransportation systems can function only as long as people have legs to walk to the car and open the door.” (Illich in Cayley, 1992, p. 241) This means that there is a hidden outside to the domain of automobility, which it is contingent upon. But also its inside is not without cracks – there remain “rests” of forgotten or maybe hidden possibilities (see Schwartz, 2002), which serve

² See Mitcham 2002, pp. 18-19 for Illich and “elegy” as mode of writing.

to remind us of what has been lost. While hitch-hikers are rarely in any obvious pain, and seldom set off from the driver by any traditional boundaries, we believe that this practice in some respects enacts a distant echo of the event told in the story of the Samaritan. The hitch-hiker is also found at the side of the road, making an appeal in plain sight, from one person directly to another, which the driver has no obligation to answer. And yet so the driver does.

First of all, it should be noted that hitch-hiking is alive and well. Whereas popular belief often holds the contrary, the authors of this paper can attest from experience that it is a viable manner of travel in Europe and many places beyond. The claims that follow build solely on such experience, and should be understood as such rather than as universally valid facts. That said, what we focus on in this section are the conditions that the hitch-hiker seeks to create in order to be successful.

Elaborating on these conditions serves to strengthen the argument above as to how automobility, and the modernity in which it has grown, have come to marginalize what are otherwise freely available such as: the possibility of gaining access to the road without making use of a car; the possibility for cars to pull over; trust towards the unknown stranger; time reasonably unbound by strict commitments. We discuss each of these in turn.

The first two conditions define the kind of place required. The hitch-hiker needs to be present in such a way as to be seen, and the driver needs the possibility to respond to this presence by answering what it calls for. That is, by stopping. The kind of spaces made for automobility are often created not only without consideration for what it takes to ensure these conditions, but frequently actively discouraging them. Fast travel requires roads free from whatever would impede it—whether debris, animals or hitch-hikers. Highways in particular are often built so to keep these out,

and to keep in the noise and fumes exuded by the machines making use of them. This means that to reach where they need to be, hitch-hikers would frequently have to illegally scale walls and fences bounding this isolated domain through which transport takes place. Once there, they also need to be *seen*.

On highways, which often span several lanes, an outstretched thumb is more likely to appear a blur at the edge of vision than as the opportunity for an encounter. And more than a thumb, what needs to be made visible is a *person*. This is possible by means of establishing eye-to-eye contact, and seldom will a driver stop in the absence of such. With the high speeds of automobility, the time for eyes to meet is reduced to the briefest of instants. Further, moving slower by one's own unassisted powers frees the world for being brought to attention with whatever it may present. In contrast, the speed of a highway demands high attention from the driver, who as a result will not be able to notice the unexpected by the side of the road.

The third condition for a successful event of hitch-hiking is trust, which passes through two stages. First, hitch-hikers will not be found by the roadside unless brought there by trust that some unknown stranger will answer their call, even as they are in no situation to compel another to do so. This is a trust not in their own ability to master a situation, but faith that the situation will turn out well even without such mastery. Second, the strangers united in hitch-hiking need to trust each other on the basis of very little but intuition - "gut feeling." One common way to partly circumvent this is when hitch-hikers approach drivers directly when they stop at (e.g.) gas stations. But even then, the mutual danger involved for both parties once the threshold of the car is crossed is all but unavoidable. For this crossing to be freely enacted, a decision needs to be made which puts trust in the surface of things. Where modernity is characterized by a suspicion which seeks to create security through mastery, this

practice rather echoes Illich's insistence to engage in “a mode of knowledge [...] which makes me aim at facing people with a willingness to take them for what they reveal about themselves – to take them, therefore, *at their word* – and not for what I know about them.” (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 57)

The fourth condition is a free relation to time. But what do we mean here by “free”? Again, for modern thinking, such freedom tends to be identified with mastery over whatever would resist the realization of one's own desires. The car itself, as Sachs shows, embodies the promise of freedom understood as individual mastery over time and space. (Sachs, 1992, p. 100) In hitch-hiking, a person makes use of automobility *without* the means to such mastery. Instead, this person relies on the unpredictable good will of others. This means that being strictly bound by a commitment to be somewhere at a particular time easily becomes a source of frustration when that good will is not quite as forthcoming as hoped for. But no such commitment means no such frustration, which reveals a critical counterproductivity brought about *in part* through the system of automobility. For with individual mastery over time and space, these individuals have themselves become increasingly mastered by commitments that bind them to be in particular places at times specified down to mere minutes. Walking may leave a person more subject to the contingencies of weather and circumstance, but in walking societies there also tends to be more freedom to answer the contingencies that may appear. Such is the reason also, of course, for many drivers not to answer the call of a hitch hiker—a commitment to be somewhere at a specific time, which does not allow any deviation from the pre-planned path of transport.

With these conditions in place, hitch-hiking is far from as difficult as many today believe. The conditions, however, are perfectly ordinary and freely available on

a road for slower kinds of travel. Essentially, the hitch-hiker endeavours to restore the conditions pertaining to meetings taking place in self-propelled movement. What then happens in hitch-hiking is a hospitable meeting, where the driver becomes like the host who presides over a table. (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 149) Sharing this table with unexpected strangers, a space is created which fills up with stories. Even in cases where those who meet do not share any common language, the stories of their lives interweave for a brief moment of travel along the road. This is a radically different manner of persons to relate than that which automobility normally affords those who are being moved through its system. And this is a possibility of wayfaring which wholly eludes consideration by those who plan roads according to the sole value of immediate point-to-point transportation. Nor is it taken into consideration by those advocating what is likely to be the next change of this system, namely the self-driving car. In the concluding section below, we offer a few remarks on this looming prospect.

Conclusion

This paper discusses movement and the roads on which this movement takes place. The claims made above assume that these are changing historical products, whose history can be approached in relation to systemic wholes. Automobility names a system connected to the whole of modernity, and the character of the movement that its roads provide space for can be understood in relation to this epoch. This embeddedness pertains to how we conceive *of* movement, how we experience such movement when engaged *in* it, and the possibilities thereby opened and closed. We follow up on the perspective that the works of Ivan Illich provide for scrutinizing these changes, which allows us develop a narrative centered on the body and the

hospitality it opens towards. In particular, how the flesh of a person's body opens towards an unexpected meeting with the unknown stranger, whose unicity might serve the ground for defining who this person himself is. As Illich puts it, "I cannot come to be fully human unless I have received myself as a gift and accepted myself as a gift of somebody who has, as we say today [...] distorted me by loving me." (Illich, Brown and Mitcham, 1997) If this is our fundamental human *telos*, and if automobility closes the opening towards it, then this system ought to be regarded with dread.

Our discussion on hitch-hiking explores a remnant of another possibility. Focusing on the conditions for realizing this practice, our argument that these are marginalized by automobility is strengthened further. We focus throughout on such conditions of possibility for a meeting which would somehow resonate with Illich's interpretation of the story of the Samaritan. The extent to which people actually seize upon such possibility when it is present is a wholly different question. The Samaritan story itself indicates how often this might not be the case, and our intention is neither to romanticize the past nor propose a definite path for the future.

Our discussion above does provide a perspective on this future, however, from an angle seldom adopted by those seeking to intentionally bring it about in a certain form. This is the future where even the perceptual engagement needed for bringing oneself from one point to another in the road network is taken over by the machine. Where the classic car, for Illich, was a tool, he recognized the difference of such cars from the rolling computers increasingly occupying the roads. (Illich and Cayley, 2005, p. 158) Such cars, as are presently being tested for widespread implementation, are said to be auto-nomous.³ That is, not only moving by their (supposedly) own powers, but also finding their own way by independently making the necessary

³ *Auto* – self; *nomos* – law.

decisions along the way. Thus, a practice would finally be realized which moves humans along roads by means of abstract rules processed by a system, without any need for their sensory engagement.

This possibility may certainly make for more efficient driving. As the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe claims in a press release: “[a]utomated driving will be the next revolution in the field of mobility. As human errors are the main reason for road traffic accidents, driving automatically controlled by a computer is expected to make future road transport safer. It has also the potential to be more environmentally friendly, efficient and accessible.” (UNECE, 2016) The text is accompanied by a picture which shows a man sitting in a driver's seat, reading. Using such terms to advocate a transition in automobility, the central value becomes that of *efficiency*. An efficiency which now enfolds even life and death. In a press release following the first human fatality occasioned by such a car, its manufacturer Tesla pointed out that this fatality was one in 130 million miles, whereas in ordinary driving (in the US) there is such a death for every 94 million miles. (The Tesla Team, 2016)

Again, we see essential elements regarding both a thinking *about* transport and the experience of engaging in it. A “tool,” that is, something which can be taken up or left behind by its user, is increasingly realized as a “system”—something which incorporates the user into its own sequence of operations. (Illich and Cayley, 2005) Illich believed that we are now undergoing an epochal shift from a paradigm of being which is defined by the former, to that of the latter. Our discussion above lets us see that this transition, in the case of automobility, may finally close off the remnant of hospitality which remains in the form of hitch-hiking. In regards to Google's prototype of such cars, for instance, difficulties have been noted with its ability to respond to police officers since “[p]edestrians are detected simply as moving, column-

shaped blurs of pixels.” (Gomes, 2014) The same problem would then apply to its ability to respond also to hitch-hikers. But even if these cars were developed so as to detect such travellers, the car has no entrails by which to let it respond beyond its programmed rules. That we have yet to find a single policy-document taking into consideration whether a driver engaged in reading would note the call of a stranger by the roadside is itself telling for how distant the debate is from the considerations opening for us through the work of Ivan Illich. In the world of modern transport, the possibilities of unexpected intimate encounters with a stranger is increasingly delimited. Even more worrying, it appears that the significance of this loss is less and less likely to be noticed to begin with.

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Anmerkungen zur Dissertation von Ivan Illich über Arnold Joseph Toynbee

Helmut Woll

Ivan Illich promovierte 1951 in Salzburg über „Die philosophischen Grundlagen der Geschichtsschreibung bei Arnold Joseph Toynbee“. Diese Arbeit wurde bisher in der Diskussion über die wissenschaftlichen Schriften von Illich wegen mangelnder Bekanntheit nicht miteinbezogen. Sie war lange Zeit verschollen. Sie ist knapp hundert Seiten lang und enthält im Anhang eine Fülle von Anmerkungen und Fußnoten.

Der britische Geschichtsforscher – Toynbee (1889-1975) – gehört zu den bedeutendsten Universalhistorikern des 20. Jahrhunderts. Er war Professor in London und dabei Direktor des Auslandsarchives des Königlichen Instituts für Internationale Fragen sowie Direktor des Archives des Foreign Office. Von seinem zehnbändigen Hauptwerk „A Study of History“ waren 1951 nur 6 Bände erschienen. Es wird in einem Atemzug mit dem berühmten Buch von Oswald Spengler „Der Untergang des Abendlandes“ (1923) genannt. Illich schreibt weder eine Biografie noch eine Wertung der Leistungen des Historikers. Er versucht erstmals systematisch nach den Grundlagen seines philosophischen Denkens zu fragen, so wie es in seinen wesentlichen Schriften und Vorträgen seit dem Beginn von „A Study of History“ zu Tage tritt. Die Arbeit gliedert sich in drei Hauptteile: Allgemeine Bestimmungen, Geschichtslogik und Ontologie. Sie fühlt sich in die Argumentationsgänge ein und beschreibt sie in einer sachlichen und möglichst objektiven Weise. Wobei Illich seine Sympathie für den glänzenden

Stil, die originellen Einfälle, die Belesenheit, die assoziative Methode, an einigen Stellen ausdrückt. Dies gilt auch für kritische Hinweise, die er in knappen Sätzen einstreut, ohne dass sie ausgeführt und begründet werden. Auch bleibt die Basis seiner Kritik nur implizit.

Der erste Hauptteil „Allgemeine Bestimmungen“ ist untergliedert in „Das Geschichtsobjekt“ und „Der Zivilisationsbegriff“. Hier beschreibt Illich die Herangehensweise Toynbees an die Geschichte. „Aufgabe des Historikers ist die Betrachtung und Beschreibung eines Schauspiels, dessen Akte, Handlungen und Auftritte von ihm beobachtet werden und die er nur dann versteht, wenn er das Stück als Ganzes kennt und die Gesetze, nach denen die „Personen“ sich bewegen“ (Illich 1951/1). Für Toynbee ist die Weltgeschichte eine beschränkte Anzahl von Dramen. Er interessiert sich als Sohn einer Historikerin für Universalgeschichte. „Der Drang nach Erfassung der geschichtlichen Einheit, nach Synthese des historischen Materials zum Zwecke einer ethischen Gegenwartsbeurteilung brachten ihn zur Kulturmorphologie in jener ganz eigenartigen Ausprägung, die er geschaffen hat“ (Illich 1951/4).

Toynbee stützt sich nach Illich vor allem auf den englischen Empirismus und auf Tukydidies. Dieser war 455-395 v.Chr. griechischer Historiker aus Athen. Sein Werk eröffnet die kritisch- objektive, politisch orientierte Geschichtsschreibung mit sorgfältiger Quellenforschung und Deutung der inneren Zusammenhänge. Philosophisch war Toynbee nach Meinung von Illich vor allem beeinflusst von den griechischen Klassikern, Macchiavelli, Hobbes, Locke und Bergson. Das Werk von Spengler hat ihn ebenfalls beeindruckt, obwohl er an vielen Stellen nicht mit ihm übereinstimmte und ihm eine materialistische Grundanschauung und einen antihistorischen Apriorismus vorwarf. Für Toynbee hat das Studium

der Geschichte einen ethisch-praktischen Sinn. Wir können aus der Geschichte lernen. Sie wiederholt sich, ohne die menschliche Freiheit zu beeinträchtigen. Diese grundlegende, intuitiv erfasste Hypothese will Toynbee im Laufe seines Gesamtwerkes empirisch beweisen.

„Um Wiederholungen und damit erst Vergleiche möglich zu machen, müssen unbedingt Einheiten gefunden werden, die miteinander verglichen werden können, denn wo nur ein einziges Objekt einer bestimmten Spezies vorhanden ist, können keine Parallelen gezogen werden“ (Illich 1951/6). Toynbee stützt sich auf den Zivilisationsbegriff. Er beschreibt vergleichbare Einheiten der Geschichte, die sich frei und dynamisch entwickeln. Zivilisationen in diesem Sinne sind logisch verständliche Einheiten und metaphysisch dynamische Gemeinschaften. Toynbee definiert Geschichte als die Wissenschaft von den Zivilisationen, von denen es nur 21 gibt.

„Nur Gesellschaften, die ihre Struktur ändern, also dynamisch sind, sei es äußerlich, sei es in ihrem Inneren – und zwar die Struktur der sozialen Verhältnisse, nicht nur die Individuen oder die äußeren Bedingungen wie landschaftliche Umgebung oder passive Kontaktaufnahme mit anderen Gesellschaften – nennt Toynbee Zivilisationen“ (Illich 1951/8). In diesem Zusammenhang grenzt Illich Toynbee auf wenigen Seiten von den Vorstellungen Spenglers und den Nationalhistorikern ab. Spengler argumentiert organisistischer und systematisiert die Kulturen viel schärfer voneinander. „Für Toynbee dagegen ist die Vergleichbarkeit der einzelnen geschichtlichen Tatsachen innerhalb verschiedener Zivilisationen logischer Ausgangspunkt zu ihrer Auffindung oder Konstitution. Die Individualität, die er seinen Kultureinheiten gibt, ist weit weniger streng, naturalistisch oder ‚unbewusst fiktiv‘ als dies bei Spengler der Fall

ist“ (Illich 1951/10). Toynbee und Spengler werden wie folgt verglichen: „So sehr Toynbees Behauptung von der ‚praktischen Gleichzeitigkeit‘ der Zivilisationen, also einer materialistischen Umdeutung der Ranke'schen Gottesunmittelbarkeit der Epochen, durch ihre relative Abgeschlossenheit an Spenglers historischen Pluralismus erinnern kann, man darf dabei nie vergessen, daß das, was bei Spengler Voraussetzung ist, nämlich die Abgeschlossenheit der Kulturkreise und ihre innere Charakteristik und Individualität, der zu Folge sie für den Historiker in der Betrachtung gleichzeitig sind, für Toynbee ein notwendiges Hilfsmittel sind, um Kulturkreise vergleichbar zu machen“ (Illich 1951/11). Illich behandelt Spenglers Untergangsvorstellungen nicht, obwohl diese von wissenschaftlicher und politischer Bedeutung waren. Ein Vergleich in dieser Frage mit den Vorstellungen Toynbees sucht man ebenfalls vergebens. Ideengeschichtlich basierte Spengler vor allem auf Goethe und Nietzsche, Toynbee dagegen ist in der englischen Philosophie beheimatet. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit diesen verschiedenen Wurzeln hätte sich hier angeboten. Spenglers Pflanzenmodell der Geschichte– vom Wachsen zum Blühen und Absterben – hätte mit dem Entwicklungsmodell von Toynbee verglichen werden können.

Auch die Auseinandersetzung mit dem nationalhistorischen Ansatz und der Vergleich mit Toynbees universalhistorischen Vorstellungen fällt sehr knapp aus. „Wie Spengler einen biologischen Begriff zum Ausgangspunkt seiner Kategorienbildung machte, so diese einen politisch-administrativen. Um diese falschen Wege der Geschichtsbetrachtung zu vermeiden, insbesondere im Bezug auf die zentrale Kategorie, nämlich die „betrachtbare Einheit“ ist es für Toynbee nötig, die in der Geschichtsschreibung des vergangenen Jahrhunderts liegenden Tendenzen aufzudecken, um sie vermeiden zu können“ (Illich 1951/11-12).

Für Toynbee hat im 19. Jahrhundert vor allem der Industrialismus und der Nationalismus einen großen Einfluss auf die Geschichtsschreibung ausgeübt. Dagegen liegt für Toynbee das Materialobjekt der Geschichte in intelligiblen, vergleichbaren Einheiten, die er gegen den Biologismus von Spengler und gegen den Subjektivismus abgrenzt. Er erfasst dabei die Geschichte von ihrer Ganzheit her. „Die Zivilisation ist die Konkretisation vorwärtsdrängender, auf freier Entscheidung ruhender Entwicklung des Menschen, Verwirklichung von stets Neuem“ (Illich 1951/18). Keine der einzelnen Gesellschaften ist mit der Gesamtmenschheit identisch. „Geschichte ist für Toynbee also die Betrachtung der lebendigen und dynamischen Einheiten gesellschaftlichen Lebens, in denen sich das gesamt menschliche Leben artikuliert, und zwar in ihrer raum-zeitlichen Gestaltung, sei es ihrer immanenten Entwicklung und Differenzierung durch verschiedene Stadien und der Ausdehnung derselben Kultureinheit im geografischen Raume, sei es ihrer gegenseitigen Beeinflussung“ (Illich 1951/22).

Im zweiten Hauptteil analysiert Illich auf knapp 10 Seiten die Geschichtslogik bei Toynbee. Dieser teilt die Geschichte in naturalistische Einheiten, die sich klar unterscheiden. Sein Weltbild ist realistisch und naturalistisch. „Geschichte ist eine Anzahl von Schauspielen, denen der Historiker zusieht und deren verschiedene Bühnen und Abläufe er in seinem Geiste gleichzeitig gegenwärtig hat und vergleichen kann“ (Illich 1951/23). Toynbee ist ein Chroniker, ein Historiker der Vergangenheit. Das Materialobjekt bestimmt die Methode, daraus ergeben sich Unschärfen in der Begriffsbildung. „Das einfachste und beste Mittel, das schon seit jeher zu dieser Form der geschichtsmetaphysischen Darstellung verwendet wurde, ist der Mythos – sei es nun, dass in früheren Zeiten bewusst Personifizierungen durchgeführt wurden,

wie in der Schöpfung eines Prometheus und Zeus oder der eines Faust und eines Mephistopheles, Hiob und Gottes, der einer Eule oder Athene, sei es, dass in neuerer Zeit diese Fiktionen ‚wissenschaftlich‘ als Archetypen bezeichnet werden oder als ‚Grundprinzipien der Metaphysik‘ “ (Illich 1951/29).

In diesem Abschnitt präzisiert Illich seine methodologischen Überlegungen. Er analysiert Toynbees naturwissenschaftliche Methode im Sinne Bacons. Der Aufbau von Hypothesen in Frageform, die an die Geschichte gerichtet werden, ist der Weg zur Gewinnung von Erkenntnissen. Das Objekt muss in das Experiment eingespannt werden, um antworten zu können. „Bevor Toynbee noch überhaupt an die Ausarbeitung seiner Geschichtsforschung geschritten war, sehen wir deutlich, wie immer wieder a priori hypothetische Frageschemata aufgebaut werden – theoretisch in ihrer Allgemeingültigkeit gestützt durch eine unterhaltsame und köstlich-eklektische Auswahl verschiedener Denker, die dann im ‚Experiment‘ verifiziert werden. Sei es, dass bewiesen werden soll, dass der Genius in einer zerfallenden Zivilisation, sich als der Retter gebärdet und zum Schwert greift, durch das Schwert umkommt – oder dass es Umweltbedingungen gibt, die stärker sind als die Lebenskraft einer Zivilisation – oder wieder, dass der geniale Mystiker, bevor er zum Führer der Gemeinschaft werden kann, selbst in die Einsamkeit muss, immer wird erst der theoretisch-psychologische Grund dieses Phänomens aus der Bibel; Smuts, Wholism & Evolution; Bergson oder den Erfahrungen eines Pferdezüchters ‚bewiesen‘ und dann erst die a-posterioristische Realität dieser Tatsache an einer reichen Sammlung von geschichtlichen Tatsachen aufgezeigt, denen gegenüber sich die theoretischen Prinzipien wie Frageschemata verhalten“ (Illich 1951/31). Illich wird noch deutlicher: „Es ist die Illusion die Kriterien der logischen Begriffsbildung in den

Erfahrungstatsachen zu finden, wo diese doch schon ganz klar nach nominalistischen Schemata geordnet wurden, während ihre innere Vergleichbarkeit gleichzeitig als empirische Tatsache hingenommen wird ohne erklärt oder bewiesen zu werden und doch durch die Leugnung aller Voraussetzungen dem geschichtlichen Werden gegenüber eigentlich unmöglich sein sollte“ (Illich 1951/32). Toynbee ist in der Methode empiristisch und in der Begriffsbildung assoziativ. Dies gerät im Hauptwerk zu einem immer größeren Widerspruch zum Versuch des Ausbaus einer transzendenten und teleologischen Ethik.

Im dritten Hauptkapitel geht Illich auf die Ontologie Toynbees ein. Ausgangspunkt dabei ist der Begriff mystische bzw. schöpferische Persönlichkeit und ihres Einflusses auf die Gesamtgesellschaft. Illich will Toynbee nicht als geschichtlichen Fachmann kritisieren, sondern er will seine - bisher nicht nachgewiesene - eklektische Methode aufzeigen. Er sieht Toynbee nicht wie sonst üblich als ‚reinen Positivisten‘ und auch nicht als einen ‚Naturwissenschaftler‘. Deswegen betont Illich die stilistische Ausdrucksweise, die Darstellungskraft, den Reichtum an Allgemeinbildung, die glänzenden Beschreibungen. Außerdem sind die ungesagten Aussagen von Toynbee genau so wichtig wie das Geschriebene. „Die Tatsache, dass für ihn die Kategorien der Geschichte schon ausgebildet sind, bevor er überhaupt an die Geschichte herangeht, dass er Spencer'sche Entwicklungslehre und Bergson'schen élan vitale für ursprünglichere Begriffe hält als die einzelnen Tatsachen der Geschichte, das ist der Anstoß für die meisten Kritiker“ (Illich 1951/36).

Toynbee geht eben als Philosoph an die Geschichte heran, als Metaphysiker eben. Was ist nun das Element, das die Geschichte in Bewegung versetzt?

Antrieb der Geschichte sind nicht Rassen oder die Umwelt, weder Gott noch sein Widersacher. Für Toynbee begründet sich die Zivilisation auf der persönlichen Begegnung zwischen dem ‚Leben‘ des Individuums und der Umwelt. ‚Werden‘ ist das Zusammentreffen von innerer Lebenskraft mit der Umwelt: challenge and response. Der Ursprung des Werdens liegt in der Seele des Menschen. Deswegen ist eine schematische Geschichtsbeschreibung unzulänglich. „Der optimale Stimulus – der goldene Mittelweg – ist also derjenige, der dem Leben eine ‚rhythmische‘ Erwidern und Behauptung möglich macht, ihm also eine Dynamik ermöglicht, durch die seine eigene Gestaltung die in der Leistung der Umwelt gegenüber objektive Gestalt geworden ist, zu einer neuen Anforderung an dasselbe Leben zu neuer Beantwortung wird.“ (Illich 1951/46). Das Leben muss durch die Umwelt erweckt werden. Mit der Verwirklichung der Idee in der Umwelt wird diese selbst wieder Welt. Die Überwindung der Naturnotwendigkeiten bedeutet eine ‚Vergeistigung‘ oder ‚Etherialization‘ der Welt. Was ist der Sinn der Entfaltung der Geschichte? Je älter Toynbee wird, desto stärker wird die religiöse Sinngebung. Indem die Welt das Leben in seiner Freiheit behindert, wird sie ihm zur Aufgabe. „Ist ‚challenge‘ Aufruf des Wächters oder Erweckers, so bestimmt er den Augenblick und die Art des Beginnes der Geschichte“ (Illich 1951/51). Toynbee nimmt an, dass jede Zivilisation ein immanentes Ziel hat und trotzdem vergleichbar ist. Dadurch, dass Individuen empfangen, geboren werden und dann sterben, werden sie vergleichbar. Wo liegt nun der wahre letzte Grund zum Kreislauf, also zum Widersinn der Geschichte? Toynbee spricht hier als liberaler Protestant von der Erbsünde. Sie lähmt die schöpferischen Kräfte des Individuums, das seine Herausforderungen bewältigen und gestalten will. Der Wissenschaftler greift hier auf eine religiöse

Erklärung zurück. ‚Leben verlangt eben Theologie des Lebens.‘ Toynbee gründet seine Geschichtsauffassung auf der Persönlichkeit und ihrem Wechselverhältnis zur Gesellschaft. Er grenzt sich deswegen von atomistischen und organizistischen Auffassungen ab. Illich wirft ihm dabei Oberflächlichkeit vor: „Sein Nominalismus macht es ihm einstweilen unmöglich, ..., eine ausreichende Gesellschaftstheorie zu entwickeln“ (Illich 1951/63). „Toynbees Analysen bleiben aber immer an diesem, vom theoretischen Standpunkt aus oberflächlichen Punkt stehen, es gelingt ihm nicht, die wirkliche gemeinsame Wurzel der Kinder des deutschen Idealismus zu finden“ (Illich 1951/66).

Toynbee definiert die Gesellschaft als unpersönliche Beziehung. „So will Toynbee in dem Begriff der Institution als Gesamtbild der unpersönlichen Beziehungen zwischen den Individuen einer Gemeinschaft die Handhabe finden, um die Sozialphänomene weder atomistisch noch auch organizistisch zu behandeln.“ (Illich 1951/69) Illich folgt gern Toynbees brillanten Überlegungen, „aber wenn er Metaphysik betreibt, dann überzeugt er nicht mehr recht“ (Illich 1951/70-71). Für Toynbee ist Träger der Geschichte nur die Einzelperson. Gleichzeitig ist Geschichte das Werden einer Zivilisation. Hier wirft Illich Toynbee vor, dass er „nicht zu einer wirklichen Synthese der grundlegenden Prinzipien kommen kann“ (Illich 1951/75). Die Persönlichkeit wirkt nach Toynbee in die Gesellschaft hinein: „Der Trieb der schöpferischen Persönlichkeit, die Mitmenschen seinem eigenen, von ihm erreichten Idealbild nachzubilden, hat seinen Grund darin, dass ex hypothesis das Wirkfeld des Genius mit dem der Gemeinschaft zusammenfällt. Aus der in der Gesellschaftslehre aufgefundenen Tatsache, dass durch die Identität von Leben, Tätigkeit und Wirkfeld jedes Individuum sich durch das ganze Feld erstreckt und sich mit ihm identifiziert,

ergibt sich, dass keine Neuschaffung der Persönlichkeit vollendet ist, bis nicht ihr Wirkbereich sich in seiner Artbeschaffenheit dem der gesamten Institution angepasst, beziehungsweise die Persönlichkeit die gesamte Gestalt der Relationen die eine Institution ausmachen, seiner eigenen, neuartigen Wirkweise nachgebildet hat“ (Illich 1951/79-80).

Persönlichkeiten der Geschichte sind Vorbilder, Wegweiser. Sie sind vor schwere Aufgaben gestellt. Dazu bedarf es großer Lebenskräfte und Konzentration, die durch innere Einkehr entwickelt werden können. „Withdrawal & return“ sind eine notwendige Begleiterscheinung von „challenge and response.“ Die schöpferischen Menschen der Geschichte haben ein mimetisches Verhältnis zu ihren Mitmenschen, d.h. ihre Geistigkeit breitet sich in Ihnen aus. Eine Zivilisation stirbt ab, wenn es keine schöpferischen Persönlichkeiten mehr gibt, bzw. wenn die mimetischen Kräfte erlahmen. Illich schließt seine Arbeit mit folgender Hoffnung ab:

„Hoffentlich ist es hier gelungen, nachzuweisen, dass die in diesem Artikel angeführten konkreten Grundkategorien der Geschichtsschreibung Toynbees, im Wesentlichen logisch aus seiner Auffassung der materiellen Geschichtsdiagnostik folgen, nach der Wachstum einer Zivilisation äußeres Zeichen der Erfüllung ihrer Aufgabe – Zerfall oder Sichtbarmachung innerer Niederlagen des Willens vor dem Naturgesetz, ist.“ (Illich 1951/83).

Was sind die Botschaften des frisch geweihten Priesters und erfolgreichen Doktoranden im Jahre 1951? Für Illich ist Toynbee ein brillanter, lebendiger Universalhistoriker, er hat eine assoziative Methode, die nur philosophisch zu begreifen ist. Sein Werk enthält einige Oberflächlichkeiten und Widersprüche. Das Verhältnis Wissenschaft und Religion ist bei ihm unbefriedigend gelöst. Der

Leser erfährt in dieser Arbeit noch keine Religions- oder Zivilisationskritik von Illich, vielmehr das Bemühen einige Grundüberlegungen Toynbees wohlwollend zur Sprache zu bringen. Dabei werden einige kritische Hinweise zu seiner Theorie eingestreut. Schon in seinem Frühwerk fordert Ivan Illich seine Leser auf hohem intellektuellen Niveau. Man schwankt aber auch ständig zwischen Bewunderung und Ablehnung hin und her. Bewundernswert ist das Gespür von Illich für die methodologischen Probleme und Zusammenhänge im Werk Toynbees. Bewundernswert ist der elegante, knappe Stil und das hohe abstrakte Niveau. Skeptisch ist der Leser über den Titel der Dissertation. Man erwartet die philosophischen Hintergründe im Werk Toynbees. Geliefert werden aber elegante methodologische Betrachtungen. Außerdem vermisst man konkrete Aussagen Toynbees zum Geschichtsprozess oder zu historischen Ereignissen, inhaltliche Aussagen fehlen weitgehend. Ob Toynbee ein optimistisches oder pessimistisches Geschichtsbild hat, darüber erfährt man nichts. Er fragt sich auch, ob man schon 1951 das Werk Toynbees adäquat beurteilen kann. Zudem wird Toynbee üblicherweise vor allem mit dem Kulturbegriff in Verbindung gebracht. Ursprung, Wachstum und Verfall werden erklärt als challenge und response. Kulturen sind dabei ‚Räder‘ am Wagen der Religion, deren höchste das Christentum ist. Toynbee analysiert diese aus der Perspektive eines rationalistischen Optimismus. Illich stützt sich vor allem auf den Zivilisationsbegriff bei Toynbee und blendet seinen Kulturbegriff und dessen Verbindung zu Religion und Christentum weitgehend aus.

Die Arbeit ist sehr einfühlsam und wohlwollend geschrieben. Die Gliederung des Hauptteils in Allgemeine Bestimmungen, Geschichtslogik und Ontologie ist ergiebig, obwohl das ganzheitliche Konzept von Toynbee dabei

zergliedert wird. Dies ist jedoch unvermeidlich. An einigen Stellen werden harte Kritikpunkte angedeutet: tautologische Argumentationen, Behauptungen statt Beweise, Oberflächlichkeit, mangelnde theoretische Fundierung des Individuumbegriffes. Diese Vorwürfe werden allerdings nicht expliziert und begründet, so dass der eigene Standpunkt des Autors schwer erkennbar ist. Einige Unterkapitel – zu Spengler, Toynbees Weg – sind sehr kurz ausgefallen und hätten eine längere Ausführung verdient. Der Anhang mit Anmerkungen und Fußnoten ist sehr hilfreich und in seiner Mehrsprachlichkeit beeindruckend. Die Arbeit widmet sich tiefgründigen Jahrhundertfragen, sie erfasst intuitiv viele neuralgische Diskussionspunkte mit einem ungeheuren Gespür, dabei werden Details nicht vernachlässigt. Die Arbeit regt den Leser an sich stärker und intensiver mit Universalgeschichte und mit Toynbee und Spengler zu beschäftigen. Sie ist eine Verbindung aus Klugheit und Cleverness.

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Bremen, Ostern 2016

Comments on Ivan Illich's Thesis on Arnold Joseph Toynbee

Helmut Woll

Ivan Illich received his doctorate in 1951 in Salzburg for his thesis on "The Philosophical Foundations of Historiography in Arnold Joseph Toynbee's Work." This work has not been considered in the discussion of Illich's scientific writings due to the fact that is not well-known. It was lost for a long time. It is almost one hundred pages long and the appendix consists of a wealth of comments and footnotes.

The British historian, Toynbee (1889-1975), was one of the most important universal historians of the 20th century. He worked as a professor in London, while also serving as director of the foreign archives of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and of the archives of the Foreign Office. In 1951, only six volumes of his ten-volume magnum opus, "A Study of History," had been published. "A Study of History" is often mentioned alongside Oswald Spengler's famous book, "The Decline of the West." (1923) Illich writes neither a biography nor does he judge the historian's accomplishments. He rather tries to systematically ask for the foundations of Toynbee's philosophical thoughts as it comes to light in his essential writings and lectures since the beginning of "A Study of History." The work is divided into three main parts: General Regulations, Historical Logic, and Ontology. It follows Toynbee's reasoning and argumentation and describes these in a factual and objective manner. While doing so, Illich occasionally expresses his sympathy for the work's brilliant style, original ideas, erudition, and associative method. This also applies to critical remarks that Illich includes in his writing in the form of short

notes but on which he does not elaborate in a more detailed fashion. The basis of his criticism thus remains only implicit.

The first main part “General Regulations” is further divided into “The Object of History” and “The Concept of Civilization.” Here, Illich describes Toynbee’s approach to historiography.

It is a historian’s task to observe and describe a play and its acts, actions and performances, which the historian will only understand if he knows the play in its entirety and is familiar with the laws by which the “personas” interact. (Illich, p. 1).

According to Toynbee, world history consists of a limited number of dramas. Being the son of a historian mother, he is interested in universal history. “The urge to capture history’s unity and the urge for synthesis of the historical material for the purpose of an ethical judgment of the present time brought him to cultural morphology in its very peculiar type, which he himself created.” (Illich, p. 4)

According to Illich, Toynbee’s ideas are largely based on British empiricism and on Thucydides, who was a Greek historian in Athens, 455-395 BC. His work opens up the critically objective, politically oriented historiography that came along with careful research of primary sources and interpretation of the inner workings. Philosophically Toynbee was, according to Illich, mainly influenced by the Greek classics, as well as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Bergson. Furthermore, Spengler’s work also impressed Toynbee, even though he disagreed with Spengler in many respects and accused him of having a materialistic worldview as well as of sharing beliefs of anti-historic apriorism. For Toynbee, the study of history has an ethical and practical sense. We can learn from history, which repeats itself without affecting human freedom. Toynbee strives to

empirically prove this basic, intuitively perceived hypothesis in the course of his magnum opus.

Illich writes, “To make repetitions and thus comparisons possible, it is absolutely necessary to find entities that can be compared to each other, because no parallels can be drawn if only one object of a particular species is present.” (Illich, p. 6) Toynbee’s ideas are based on the concept of civilization. He describes comparable entities in history, which can develop freely and dynamically. In this sense, civilizations are logically comprehensible entities and metaphysically dynamic communities. Toynbee defines history as the science of civilizations, of which only twenty-one exist.

Toynbee only calls those communities a civilization that change their structures and are dynamic, either on the outside or on the inside – that is, in the structure of social conditions, not just individuals or external conditions such as the geographical environment or passive attempts of contacting other societies. (Illich, p.8)

In this context, Illich illustrates the difference between Toynbee and the ideas of Spengler and of other national historians on just a few pages. Spengler argues in a more organic fashion and systematizes different cultures much more. Illich writes, “For Toynbee, on the other hand, the comparison of different historical facts within different civilizations constitutes a logical starting point to their discovery or constitution. The individuality that he gives his cultural entities is far less strict, naturalistic, or ‘unconsciously fictional’ than Spengler’s work.” (Illich, p. 10) Toynbee and Spengler are compared by Illich as follows:

As much as Toynbee's claim of a ‘practical simultaneity’ of civilizations, that is, a materialistic interpretation of the Rankean divine immediacy of epochs, might remind us of Spengler’s historical pluralism because of its relative seclusion, we must never forget, that what is a precondition in Spengler’s work – i.e., the isolation of cultures and these cultures’ inner character traits and individuality,

which makes them simultaneous if contemplated by a historian – is just a necessary tool for Toynbee, which he uses to be able to compare cultures. (Illich, p. 11)

Illich does not write about Spengler's ideas of decline, although these were of scientific and political importance. One also searches in vain for a comparison of this issue within Toynbee's ideas. As far as the history of ideas is concerned, Spengler was rather influenced by Goethe and Nietzsche, while Toynbee's home is in English philosophy. This would have been a good chance for a discussion of these different roots. One could have compared Spengler's plant model of history—from growing to flowering and dying—with Toynbee's model of development.

The analysis of the national historical approach and the comparison with Toynbee's universal-historical ideas falls short as well. "As much as Spengler made a biological concept the starting point of his category system, as much was the latter political and administrative. To avoid these false ways of looking at history—particularly in relation to the central category, namely the 'viable unit'—it is necessary for Toynbee to uncover the tendencies that can be found in the historiography of the past century in order to avoid them." (Illich, pp. 11-12)

According to Toynbee, in the 19th century, it was especially industrialism and nationalism that greatly influenced the writing of history. The material object of history, on the other hand, lies in intelligible, comparable entities that Toynbee aims to define to show how they differ from Spengler's biologism and from subjectivism. In doing so, he seizes history in its wholeness. Illich concludes, "Civilization is the concretization of

forward pressing human development and realization of new concepts, based on free will.” For Illich, none of the individual societies is identical to humanity in its entirety.

According to Toynbee, history then is a contemplation of vibrant and dynamic units of social life, which contain the entire human life in its spatio-temporal organization, whether demonstrated in its immanent development and differentiation throughout various stages and the extent of the same cultural entity in one geographical space, or demonstrated in their mutual influence.” (Illich, p. 22)

In the second main part, Illich analyzes Toynbee’s logic of history in a little under ten pages. Toynbee divides history into naturalistic units that are clearly distinct from each other. His worldview is realistic and naturalistic. “History is a number of plays, which historians are watching. The various stages and plots are simultaneously present in the historian’s mind and he can constantly compare them.” (Illich, p. 23) Toynbee is a chronicler, a historian of the past. The material object determines the method, which leads to a lack of precision in definitions.

The simplest and best way, which has been employed for historio-metaphysical demonstration from the beginning of time, is the myth – be it in early times by means of deliberate personifications as seen in the creation of Prometheus and Zeus or of Faust and Mephistopheles, Job and God, an owl or Athene, or as seen more recently when these fictions are more ‘scientifically’ called archetypes or ‘basic principles of metaphysics.’ (Illich, p. 29)

In this section, Illich clarifies his methodological considerations. He analyzes Toynbee’s scientific method according to Bacon. The way to awareness lies in the construction of hypotheses in the form of questions addressed to history. The object must be part of the experiment in order to be able to provide answers.

“Before Toynbee even started his historical research, it becomes apparent how again and again a priori hypothetical schemes of questions are being constructed – theoretically these are being supported in their generality by an eclectic selection of thinkers that are then verified in an ‘experiment’. Be it that he wants to prove

that the genius in a decaying civilization, who behaves like a savior and raises his sword, dies by that sword; or be it that there are forces of nature that are stronger than the vitality of a single civilization; or be it that the brilliant mystic has to undergo solitude before he can become the leader of society – the theoretical-psychological reason of phenomena found in the Bible; Smuts, Holism & Evolution; Bergson, or the experience of a horse breeder always has to be ‘proven’ first – only to then demonstrate the a-posterioristic reality of these facts by showing a rich collection of historical facts, compared to which the theoretical principals appear as schemes of questions. (Illich, p. 31)

Illich further clarifies:

The illusion, the criterions of conceptualization, has to be found in facts of experience, given that these were clearly arranged according to nominalist schemes, while their internal comparability is being accepted as empirical fact without providing explanations or proof and while this should be impossible giving the denial of all conditions of historical development.” (Illich, p. 32)

Toynbee is empirical in his methods and associative in the formation of concepts. In his magnum opus, this causes a growing opposition compared to his attempt at developing a transcendental and teleological concept of ethics.

In the third main chapter, Illich illustrates Toynbee’s ontology. His starting point here is the term of mystical or creative personality and its influence on society as a whole. Illich does not attempt to criticize Toynbee in his role as a skilled historian, he rather wants to illustrate his eclectic method that has not been demonstrated before. He does not see Toynbee as a “pure positivist,” as he is usually described, but also not as a “scientist.” This is why Illich stresses the stylistic expression, the descriptive power, the wealth of general knowledge, the brilliant descriptions etc. Moreover, Toynbee’s unspoken statements are just as important as his written statements. “The impulse for most critics is the fact that for Toynbee, the categories of history are already formed before he even

approaches history and that he takes Spencer's theory of evolution and Bergson's élan vital as more original concepts than individual historical facts." (Illich. P. 36)

It can be said that Toynbee approaches history as a philosopher, more precisely as a metaphysician. What, then, is the element that sets history in motion? The driving power of history are not races or the environment, but also not God or his antagonist. According to Toynbee, civilization is based on the personal encounter between the "life" of an individual person and the environment. "Becoming" is the coming together of inner vitality and the environment: challenge and response. The origin of becoming lies in the soul of every human. Therefore, a schematic account of history is inadequate.

The optimal stimulus – the golden middle – is thus the one that allows life a 'rhythmic' response and assertion, i.e. the one that permits life to have a dynamic which in turn permits a design that by means of his own performance in the environment becomes objective form and meets demands of life. (Illich, p. 46)

Life has to be awakened by the environment. With the realization of an idea in the environment, the environment can become a world again. Overcoming the natural necessities means a 'spirituality' or 'etherialization' of the world. What is the meaning of the unfolding of history? The older Toynbee becomes, the more religious is his reasoning. As the world hinders life in its freedom, the more it becomes a task for him. "If 'challenge' is a call by the guardian or revivalist, he determines the moment and the kind of the beginning of history." (Illich, p. 51) Toynbee assumes that every civilization has an inherent goal and is still comparable. The fact that individuals are conceived, born, and then die makes them comparable. Where then is the last true reason for this cycle, that is, for the absurdity of history? As a liberal Protestant, Toynbee refers to original sin in this context. Original sin paralyzes the creative powers of the individual person who wants to

deal with its challenges and form them. The scientist draws on a religious explanation here. "Life just demands a theology of life." Toynbee bases his conception of history on personality and its relationship to society. Thus, he distances himself from atomistic and organic conceptions. In this regard, Illich accuses him of superficiality: "His nominalism makes it impossible for him, ..., to develop an adequate social theory." (Illich, p. 63)

"Toynbee's analyses always stagnate at this point of view, which from a theoretical stance is superficial, he does not manage to locate the true root of the children of German idealism." (Illich, p. 66)

Toynbee defines society as an impersonal relationship. "Thus, Toynbee wants to find a handle in the concept of institutions as a general picture of impersonal relationships between individuals in a society, in order to treat social phenomena as neither atomistic nor organic." (Illich, p. 69) Illich enjoys following Toynbee's brilliant thoughts, "but when he does metaphysics, he is no longer convincing." (Illich, pp. 70-71) According to Toynbee, only the individual carries history. At the same time, history is the genesis of civilization. Here, Illich accuses Toynbee of "not being able to come to a true synthesis of basic principles." (Illich, p. 75) According to Toynbee, personality influences society. Illich writes,

The drive of a creative personality to create his fellow men after his own ideal is based on the fact that, according to the proposed hypothesis, the genius's field of influence coincides with that of society. It follows from the sociological fact that identity of life, activity, and the field of influence of every individual person spans the entire field and identifies with this field, that no re-creation of personality is completed until its field of influence has adapted to that of the entire institution, or until personality has adapted in its own, novel model to the shape of relations that make up an institution. (Illich, pp. 79-80)

Historical figures are role models and guides. They face difficult tasks. This requires great vitality and concentration, which can be developed through contemplation. “Withdrawal & return” are necessary concomitants of “challenge and response.” Creative people in history have a mimetic relationship with their fellow men, that is, their spirituality spreads. A civilization dies if there are no more creative personalities, or if the mimetic forces weaken. Illich closes his work with the following hope: “I hope to have successfully shown that the basic categories of Toynbee’s historiography, which were described in this work, mostly follow logically from his conception of the material dialectic of history according to which growth of a civilization is a sign of success – and decay or visualization of internal defeat is the will before the law of nature.” (Illich, p. 83)

What are the messages of this newly ordained priest and successful recipient of a PhD in 1951? Toynbee is a brilliant, vivid universal historian, with an associative method that can only be grasped philosophically. Illich’s work includes some superficialities and contradictions. The relationship between science and religion has not been satisfactorily resolved in his dissertation. Readers do not learn about his criticism of religion or civilization in this work (these have been published later by Illich since Aug. 2004), rather this is an effort to put some of Toynbee’s basic considerations into words. While doing so, Illich intersperses them with a few critical notes on his theory. Even in his early work, Ivan Illich challenges his readers with his high intellectual level of thought. Nevertheless, one constantly fluctuates between admiration and rejection. What is admirable is Illich’s sense for the methodological problems and relationships in Toynbee’s writing. Furthermore, the elegant, concise style and the highly abstract level of writing are admirable. The reader is skeptical of the title of the dissertation though. One

would have expected the philosophical foundations in Toynbee's work. But instead, the reader gets elegant, methodological considerations. In addition to that, there are no direct statements on Toynbee's part concerning the historical process or historical events. Also there are mostly no content-related statements. We do not learn whether Toynbee has an optimistic or pessimistic view of history. It is further debatable whether it is already possible to adequately assess Toynbee's work in 1951. Moreover, Toynbee is usually associated mainly with the concept of culture. Origin, growth, and decay are being explained as challenge and response. Cultures are in this respect "wheels" on the wagon of religion, the highest of which is Christianity. Toynbee analyzes these from a rationalistic, optimistic perspective. Illich bases his argumentation primarily on Toynbee's concept of civilization and does not address his concept of culture and its connection to religion and Christianity.

This dissertation is worded in a sensitive and positive way. The structure of the main part, divided into General Regulations, Historical Logic, and Ontology is productive, even though Toynbee's holistic concept is being cut into pieces here. This is, however, inevitable. In some instances, strong criticism shines through: tautological arguments, assertions rather than evidence, superficiality, lack of theoretical foundation of the concept of individuality. The allegations, however, are not being explained and justified, which makes it difficult to judge the author's own position. Some of the subchapters—on Spengler and on Toynbee's path—are very short and deserved to be longer. The appendix with annotations and footnotes is very helpful and impressive in its multilingualism. This work addresses profound issues of the century, it intuitively captures many neuralgic points of discussion with great sensitivity and without neglecting attention to detail. This

work encourages its readers to concern themselves more strongly and more intensively with universal history and with Toynbee and Spengler. It is a combination of intelligence and cleverness.

Bremen, Germany
Easter 2016

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Translation by Ines A. Martin, July 2016.

Gender: Notes To the Text¹

Fabio Milana

1.

The text that is being proposed again here after thirty years is a rare one by Ivan Illich that has not been republished, reprinted or even just received renewed interest in the meantime. This is true for the whole of Europe, if we exclude the exception of Germany, where a second edition was published in 1995, with the cooperation of the still-living author. The title is obviously included in the posthumous *Oeuvres Complètes* of 2004-05, though in a “transposition” that Illich had praised at the time as “*l’exact équivalent*” of his own text in the local “vernacular,” but which together with this quality presents a marked autonomy from the original English version.²

2.

It is known that Illich brought *Gender* to completion during a long stay at the Wissenschaftskolleg in West Berlin (October 1981 -- April 1982), planned expressly in view of this commitment. A first draft of the essay already existed, however, co-

¹ This paper was first published as an afterword in I. Illich, *Genere. Per una critica storica dell'uguaglianza*, Neri Pozza, Vicenza 2013. A second edition of the book was issued in October 2016 with the title, *Gender. Per una critica storica dell'uguaglianza*. Noteably, the word *gender* has become an Italian word during the last two years, due to the Catholic mobilization against a so called “gender theory” (in Butler's sense of the term). Quotations bear reference to the paging of the original version (1982). The present English translation is by Jane Upchurch. After the composition of this text, two noticeable books of memories appeared in Europe concerning the same subject: Franco La Cecla's, *Ivan Illich e la sua eredità* (Medusa: Milano, 2013) and Uwe Pörksen's, *Camelot in Grunewald. Szenen aus dem intellektuellen Leben der achtziger Jahre* (C.H. Beck: München, 2014).

² Some explanations are omitted at this point, about special choices in revising the previous Italian translation, and particularly about the terms or expressions “tools” (*strumenti/utensili*), “broken gender” (*genere dimidiato*), “vernacular speech” (*lingua dell'uso vernacolare*), “taught mother tongue” (*madrelingua insegnata*) and the adjective “gendered” (in recent Italian: *di genere*). This section of the original paper concluded: “That which, after what is by now a considerable time, will appear more easily for what it is, the only important male contribution to the development of a ‘philosophy of gender,’ will not be more easily received just because of this, but perhaps it will be more calmly discussed, or at least finally put in records.”

authored with Lee Hoinacki in the summer of 1981, as the author tells us in the foreword to the first edition. It was documented “in real time” by Valentina Borremans in her “Tecno-Politica” series with the title, *Vernacular Gender* (“as of July 1981”). It was just the start of another of those swarms of temporary or collateral publications that normally accompanied the appearance of one of Illich’s major titles and which makes his bibliography a kind of brain-teaser. Preserved in them, though, is a trace of the circumstances and the way in which he prepared his campaigns of intellectual agitation. Opening this first known draft, for example, it is immediately clear how the author aimed to complete and formally present his research at the seminar in Berkeley, only expected for the end of the following year, probably taking into account also the prestige of that location. In the meantime, adhering to the customs of “Tecno-Politica,” he authorized his text to be reproduced in any kind of journal (ample excerpts came out in *CoEvolution Quarterly* in March 1982, for example), or even in volume form up to a maximum of 250 copies, in view of some preliminary penetration of the theories of the essay. Thanks to a piece of news in the editorial note of *Vom Recht auf Gemeinschaft* (1982; in Italian *Lavoro ombra*, 1985), we know that in November 1981 the text was already in the hands of Ruth Kriss-Rettenbeck, who used it in a seminar at the University of Munich and at the same time was translating it into German. In all likelihood it was this version that was discussed at the faculty of theology of the University of Marburg in the first months of 1982, to which the author refers in the foreword to the 1995 German republication. However, we do not know exactly what stage of development the work was at. The original draft is entirely used in the final version, but whereas in the first part (corresponding to the current chapters I and II) the concordances are both ample and literal, in the second one (current chapters III-V) integrations and changes of position gradually increase, while in the last one (chapters

VI-VII) they become preponderant. We can say with relative certainty that the long chapter on religious history that embraces the theme of penitence and then all of *The Iconography of Sex*, as well as the theory of a transition period under the system of “broken gender,” both belong to a later stage of development of the essay.

But it is also more interesting to observe the “high definition” of this first, though partial draft, which became part of the final text with few adjustments, mostly in the margins of the paragraphs, mainly to confer more brilliance to the endings of the sentences. Right from the start, the author has in mind a handy and engaging pamphlet, able to circulate autonomously from that apparatus of glosses that will only be added subsequently, as a second supporting text and counterpoint, this time aiming at a generally academic audience. That the long stay in Germany was chiefly destined to provide an in-depth bibliographical analysis, as would be deposited in the very rich “titled footnotes,” is also borne witness to by the beautiful recollection of those months left by Gesine Bottomley, librarian at the Wissenschaftskolleg.

The only just-founded Berlin-based institute, modeled on the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, hosted eighteen fellows in that first year of activity, among them a certain Gershom Scholem in the last months of his life, and among others Uwe Pörksen, to whom we owe the memory of the stormy conference with Illich on “*Genus und Sexus*.” But Pörksen is mainly the one who a few years later would give a convincing phenomenology of the “Key words” here in footnote 2, fittingly renaming them *Plastikwörter* or “plastic words”—an expression soon acknowledged and re-launched by Illich himself and today better codified than the previous one. Other scholars gathered around Illich in those months, involving themselves in different ways in the process of developing the text: among them Ludolf Kuchenbuch, who, with his work as a medievalist, corroborated and enriched the

categorical framework of *Gender* then and afterwards. Also present was a young Franco La Cecla, whose very successive *Modi bruschi* (2000) likewise gathered and developed far-off input. Above all, the presence of Barbara Duden should be underlined, to whose studies, interests and polemic stimuli Illich attributes the origin of his research. Duden then accompanied it step-by-step, contributing at the end to “mediating” it to the German public, in particular with a re-working of the “thematic footnotes” that make that edition almost incomparable with any other. Also present were two Italian women scholars, Raffaella Lamberti and Gianna Pomata, who in 1981 initiated the *Centro di Documentazione, Ricerca e Iniziativa delle Donne* (Women’s Documentation, Research and Enterprise Centre) in Bologna. In the same year that these women began this well-known feminist initiative in Bologna, they also began a friendship with Illich in Berlin.

Grown within such an interweaving of relationships (or much wider, as it is reasonable to suppose), the book should have appeared in the US towards the end of the summer of 1982, in time for the students at Berkeley to take a look at it before the start of the Regents Lectures, as required by the announcement of the first of these scheduled for 30th September. There was most likely a makeshift edition in circulation, destined just for those students and procured once again by “Tecno-politica,” in concert with the University of Pennsylvania (in the meantime Valentina Borremans, too, was exploring the technical transformations of the “*agobio de las mujeres*” on her own). In its almost definitive form, though still devoid of footnotes, the essay had meanwhile appeared in July in the Canadian journal, *Alternatives*. However, the first edition by Pantheon Books, which established the text and fixed the title as *Gender* (with doubts from the publisher, while Illich expressed feeling somewhere between proud and amused), was not released until the end of the year. The following year,

1983, there was Marion Boyars' English version, the already-mentioned French edition by *Le Seuil*, which was called the *Le genre vernaculaire*, and Rowohlt's German version, which added the explanatory subtitle, *Zu einer historischen Kritik der Gleichheit* to the unwanted *Genus* of the title.

A year later, in 1984, the Italian edition took up the subtitle (*Per una critica storica dell'uguaglianza – For a historical critique of equality*), as a complement to the certainly less esoteric title of the whole series (*Il genere e il sesso – Gender and Sex*), devoid however of the didactic zeal of a contemporary Dutch version, which placed a sculptural *Man/Vrouw* ("Man/Woman") before everything else. The Swedish (1985) and Danish (1986) editions are aligned with the German title. The Spanish version, which Gustavo Esteva collaborated on, did not appear in Mexico until 1990, returning to the *Género vernáculo* preferred in Cuernavaca.

Beyond the pillars of Hercules of our West, the Japanese case is remarkable, with three editions in twenty years (1984, 1998, 2005). Here, Yoshiro Tamanoi's version introduced in *nihongo* not only the fortunate neologism of the title *Jendā* (immediately specified by *onna* and *otoko*, "woman" and "man," in this case), but together with this also a concept around which an influential, long-lasting intellectual and political debate focused, to the point that Illich, Duden and Tamanoi had to intervene once again (1986) to deepen and clarify. In more recent years the book approached the two side entrances of the Islamic world, with the Turkish (1996) and Indonesian editions (2007), the latter proposed as "The Loss of Gender." A wide and slow diffusion, can be seen, with different degrees of in-depth penetration, borne witness to by the re-emergence of the lemmas "vernacular" and "gender", put together in recent social-anthropological studies with an explicit or not reference to Illich, but with the debt owed to him being clear.

3.

Thematically, the prehistory of the essay goes back to *Medical Nemesis* (1975). This is not only because, as the author himself recalled many times, it was on the occasion of the presentation of this book at Harvard that he had to face Norma Swenson's unexpected provocation: "Prof. Illich, have you ever seen 'a human body'?" Also, as Giovanna Morelli has so conveniently underlined, precisely in that book something like a historical quality of the body, the senses, the flesh, takes shape in the interests of its author, already hinting at a genealogical approach to the research themes. This different positioning can be recognized at work in the writings that immediately followed, in particular the essay on *Shadow Work* which introduces the notions of the *economic neutrality of sex* and its *polarization* in productive work and *shadow work*, in fact. Such notions are illustrated as relative to further and conflicting historical phenomena with respect to a previous "vernacular" universe, which the essay rediscovers in parallel and puts into words. It then spreads through these passages of history of economics, the family, the couple and of women in all this, also in the substantial appendix of titled glosses (however, rewritten and shortened, remarkably, in the above-mentioned German edition, as in the Italian that stems from it), which already prefigure the content and form of *Gender*. One gets no further than the second chapter of this subsequent work, though, therefore of its *pars destruens*, and the connection between genealogical method on the one hand, notion and perspective "of gender" on the other, still has not been worked at this level (1980). In what way it was produced, evidently between 1980 and 1981, with the unearthing of the "vernacular gender" and its promotion to "ideal type", able to act as a parameter in the evolution of Western societies, does not seem possible to establish for certain. A

possibly eloquent clue is found in the Tokyo speech on “common peace” (December 1980) and in the Marburg one on “ecumenical we” (winter 1980-81) that we read at the end of *Vom Recht auf Gemeinheit*. Here Illich distances himself from that universalism to be exported, of both Enlightenment and Christian origins (as he now begins to perceive, or explicitly starts to say), that makes a desert of the differences and then calls it “man” (the “we,” “peace,” the “Church,” etc). It is about a motive that is always underlying the agitation of thought promoted by him, but errors excepted, openly thematized and made the object of controversy only starting from these writings, which also contemplate or at least allude to something close to the difference “of gender.” But the term itself, and above all its conceptual opposition to “economic sex,” are still missing—what can be speculated is how a leap beyond a preliminary context which was strongly marked by the prevalence of German-speaking interlocutors, does not seem in turn subordinate to the same culture. It is conceivable that not by chance the prompt slating of the book by the New York Times (January 1983) carried in the title an ironic *Vive la différence!* See footnote 56 in regard to this (with the decisive reference reduced in the French and German versions, though).

Illich was well aware of the intervening “leap”—“what I am finding in my attempt to write a history of gender and the economics of scarcity is that this approach serves me as a better heuristic investigating tool than anything I have had in hand so far,” is reported in the editorial of *CoEvolution Quarterly*. Based on a philosophical anthropology, let’s call it thus, free from the undifferentiated *anthropos* of “human” sciences, he could consider himself to have identified an extraordinarily sensitive historical index for processes that were the subject of his research, and earned a more elementary and solid foundation, more intimately incarnated in the historical experience of living women and men, to his criticism of modern conceptions and

institutions. Perhaps the exceptional fervour of studies, relationships and activities that characterize the year spent between Berlin and Berkeley is owed to the enthusiasm of this discovery. Or one can believe, with La Cecla's testimony, that his recently recognised illness and the prospect of imminent death induced Illich to the extreme effort of giving complete testimony of himself, or to himself.

4.

However a "descent to the mothers" had started for him with the decision to return to Germany at the end of 1979, overcoming the bewilderment of those, like Hoinacki, who were not able to explain the availability of their friend towards the country that had exterminated several members of his maternal family. Fortunately things were not like that at all for those ancestors, albeit "diagnosed" as "Jewish" in the years of the *Anschluss* and diligently persecuted. Illich was no less aware, however, that he was returning to the land and the language of a trauma. The Berlin episode recalled more than once by Duden (of an ex-Nazi officer who turned up at an hotel room with a message that will remain unknown since the receiver, suddenly a terrified young man, closed the door on impulse) bears witness to an all too reactive state of alert. On the other hand, was it not perhaps the bribes, that the adolescent Ivan delivered on behalf of his grandfather to some representative of the occupying authorities, in the first degree of that "demonic dimension" which he will speak about at the end of the essay on *Shadow work*, and that at its peak would come to the point of extorting "unpaid work from the Jew in the camp [...] exacted from him as his due contribution to his own extinction"? An exemplary revelation of the *mysterium iniquitatis* had appeared in those circumstances, what afterwards would be perfected in the dynamics of the so-called "development" and of every other do-goodism attached

to it: the perversion of a “scientifically” discriminated people, up to the point of making them a player in agreement with their own annihilation. In the writings of these years, Illich indicated the fulfilled form of that in *sexism* (which the feminist movement of “emancipation” seemed to him only a deeper integration and internalization of). In the game of abbreviations introduced at footnote 59 (neglected by all the translations, but reinstated here in its original tenor) most likely Illich alludes to this dark genealogy.

At just over fifty years of age and on the threshold of a long-lasting “conservative revolution,” Illich was nevertheless aware of the closure of a phase of his, but not only his, life. Behind him he had the failure of a new start in the Far East, whose fabulous distances he had already cultivated in his adolescent readings. In Kassel, 1979-1981, he had started teaching medieval history, which involved the calculated regression to certain studies carried out in Salzburg thirty years before, between 1950 and 1951, around the time of his ordination as a priest and just before his emigration to the United States. Also his getting in touch with Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck again, a companion and witness of that study period, and a fellow disciple of that *Christliche Volkskunde*, which now, with his wife Ruth, he was one of the leading experts on in the German-speaking sphere (the “popular piety” that was well-known to the young Ivan of the Vienna years, as well as his verses as a boy), came the same full circle through a different path. It was about earning a placement unrelated to the dialectics of the present, stepping back in historical time to the bifurcation of the 12th century, as the author has explained several times; but simultaneously, also going back in living time, until the potentially inaugural season of a life then not chosen as one’s own. Added to this – begging pardon for an inventory put together so summarily – the turning-point meeting with Barbara Duden; the illness that was believed to be

fatal as mentioned above; and even the military escalation between the blocs that deployed new nuclear missiles in Europe and involved Prof. Illich in the mobilisation of young students in Kassel—the elementary roles of life and death (birth and parents, one’s own and the opposite sex, the religious and civil profession, evil threatened or inflicted) were all present in, or at least underlying, the elaboration process of the book.

It is difficult, for example, that from a sentence like the one on p. 124 (“at the turn of the twentieth century, in Massachusetts earlier than in Berlin or Milan, genderless hospital birth [...] began to be advertised as a benefit for the mother herself”) he completely excluded the “memory” of his own birth in a Viennese clinic, in 1926, hundreds of miles away from his Dalmatian *domus*. It is just as difficult, for the informed reader, not to recognize in the features of remote Montaillou (“it is the *domus* that counts, even more than spouse or child. Not the naked family, but the *domus* is subsistent and autarchic—it reproduces itself in offspring,” p. 117), a coefficient of that transfiguration of *Ilić Dvor* in Sutivan (“on my non-Jewish side, I was trained to say that a son is given to the house,” can be read in the *Conversation* with David Cayley; or said negatively: “[it would have been] impossible for me to give children to these towers down on the island in Dalmatia where my grandfathers and great-grandfathers made children”), that Illich gradually nurtured through the years, together with the decision to never be able to go back there again.

It is also unlikely that Father Tromp’s quote (footnote 113) was not accompanied by the recollection of studies at the Gregorian University, when the editor of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* had introduced him to the first treaties of fundamental theology, among them *de ecclesia*. It was about the Church that had welcomed and moulded him, and which Father Illich had been a very active part of,

and was still part of, although as a compiler of a reprimand, that is hard to imagine as not being onerous for him. (pp.189 ff.) Too, it was about the thought of the sacraments received many times and more often administered, above all penitence, reread now as “perversion of the early Christian idea of reform.” (footnotes 114-115, excluded though, or partially camouflaged in others, in the German edition)

And perhaps one should have the courage to go further, to ask oneself what it could mean for a man at the peak of his maturity, to have to disown himself as a “man,” that is as a member of an undifferentiated “mankind,” and to divest himself of his “person,” that is the universal neutral divider of that whole, the abstract support of a mass of ascribed needs-rights-consumption—and the ridding himself of his “sex” as a simple “attribute,” perceiving rather the “taste of rape” intrinsic to “modern sexism” (footnote 20), little matter if with the face of violence or of virtue, and asking himself what “chastity” really is.

5.

Perhaps only in the point-blank statement that concludes the first chapter, “about the future I know and say nothing,” the indirect reminiscence emerges of a text that, without being a source for *Gender*, probably forms something much more decisive for it. It is about the book *Die Frau vor der Zukunft* (‘Woman facing the future’) that Illich’s mother had written in New York and published in Vienna in 1961, under the pseudonym of E.[llen] R.[ose] Maexie (the nickname given to her in the family). With this pseudonym, she had lived a kind of “secret public life” starting from 1946 (news of this is given for the first time here), entering into contact with famous intellectuals and publishing some articles in journals before the volume came out in Herold (a publishing house) complete with an *imprimatur* from the archdiocese of Vienna. It is

not possible here, and it would be too arduous in any case, to try to make a coherent profile of this woman. Suffice it to say that there is no trace of her writing activity before 1943, when, in Florence where she had found refuge with her children, but now under German occupation, she set her hand to writing some family *Chronicles* in order to save the memory of a past in flames for her children. Still of a narrative nature, though “fictitious,” are the first texts, between 1945 and 1947, in which she reacts to a rather more radical *Disintegration* of the historical-natural cosmos she loved—the explosion of Hiroshima. Not much can be added to her relationship with her eldest son, for which there is no available direct documentation, apart from her will entrusting “all papers, manuscripts and personal writings” to Ivan with the exclusive right “to decide what to do with them.” He will do something more and different, he will start to put down his own writings and publish them under his own name, already in the year after Maexie’s death in 1965. His mother’s legacy, in any case, is enough to bear witness to a significant (even) intellectual understanding, a partnership in whose balance of influences, presumably reciprocal, the weight of contributions and relationships will gradually be modified through time. However, it would continue to nourish itself thanks to the cohabitation of the two in the territory of the same New York parish where Ivan exercised his ministry (and she showed herself to be quite well informed also about the years when he was based in Puerto Rico, 1956-60, the same as those of the conception and composition of the volume).

Ignored at the time and rarely reread, *Die Frau vor der Zukunft*, presents a rather surprising line of reasoning that ends up bestowing a singular profile to a theory whose centre was not exactly unknown to Catholic culture (to a Gertrud von Le Fort, to mention one at its highest level) nor to Protestant reflection either (Charlotte von Kirschbaum, to remain within the German-speaking sphere). Similarly, not too

heterogeneous, either, to the American way of life in the 1950s as rendered and “disenchanted” at the same time by Betty Friedan just a couple of years after Maexie’s book.

A post-modern era (“*post-moderne Zeitalter*”) is at the door, the author claims – since the modern one, marked by the male technical hubris, came in with the final and catastrophic phase of the Atomic Age. Women are the pioneers of this new era (“eschatological,” since mankind’s salvation or destruction are involved). Not the (deceptively) “emancipated” ones, according to the model represented and imposed by man (“in a form to which no woman of the previous generations would ever have lowered herself”), but those who had remained happily “backward” (in the same way as mission populations, Maexie points out – on which we try, under a mask of charity but fortunately without success, to impose Western culture and lifestyle along with Christian faith). These, for this reason have maintained or intend to recover a relationship with “traditional” values and behaviour. The reader of *Gender* already knows, from these few signs, why it is necessary to stop and consider this precedent, but we can even go a little further. The traditional *Weiblichkeit*, which also natural law and biblical revelation depose in favour of, contemplates an instrumental and subordinate position of woman next to and at the service of man, “lord of creation.” Yet, it is precisely such a position as “mediatrix” and “co-redemptrix,” according to God’s plan of redemption (and by now also according to Church awareness, after the developments of Mariology and after the introduction of the apostolate of the laity), that authorises women to take on the role of guides (“*Führerinnen*”) in the current crisis, to exercise their mission of natural and spiritual “bringing into the world” of humanity that, in the present hour, takes on the characteristics of an authentic *Reintegration*.

But this will only be possible for them provided that they reclaim awareness of their own essential *diversity*. Moreover, it is precisely “the Judeo-Christian tradition that tells us that man and woman are different, because God made them different, with different vocations and different missions, though with the same aim of loving God,” opposing that neutralizing process (“*Neutralisierungsprozess*”) that assimilates men and women more and more into a “*uniforme Indifferenz*,” especially in the West. And provided that women fully recover their practical authority and autonomy in the “domain” that traditional societies had always recognised as theirs and no man had ever dreamed of contending. Of course, it will not be easy for men, even those with the best intentions, to recognise now not only *the absolute equal rights of women as women* in their integral difference (“*in ihrer ganzen Verschiedenartigkeit*”) but even their *superiority within the sphere of action that belongs to them* (“*ihre Überlegenheit im eigensten Wirkungskreis*”). Whereas other men, as “scientific experimenters,” intervene more and more heavily to devastate once-protected areas such as education, nutrition, “psychohygiene.” In the ecclesial field, however, “as long as a better intelligence of women’s needs hasn’t become common domain, the *self-help* of women among themselves will be one of the main tasks of the female apostolate of the laity, and through this the most autonomous and expert ones will help their sisters, so confused and unhappy today, to ‘understand themselves.’”

It is not possible here, neither would it always be enlightening, to follow Maexie in her illustration of female diversity. It is not even possible to relate in detail her criticism of the totalitarianism creeping into the “free world,” conducted on the basis of a mainly Anglo-Saxon “critical thought” (Orwell, Huxley, Packard, Galbraith, Mumford, Riesman, Lippmann), but framed in the atmosphere of Soloviev’s *Antichrist*. It would be relevant for us on several points, for example, where she

introduces a contrast between *Heim* and *Wohnstätte*, home and residence, or denounces the pressure of the *Volkskapitalismus* on housewives, proclaiming the need for a *Konsum-askese* organised by them (here in the footsteps, though rather more delicate, of Dorothy Dohen).

One cannot even relate in depth, her argument against scholastic philosophy and the hoped-for “return to the fathers” by the “Christian gnosis,” which would mean Roman Catholicism renewing relations with eastern spiritual trends, with mystic experience and with the rabbinic tradition. Neither can one linger on the ecclesial geography that the author outlines (with a group of “radical postmodernists” wedged between progressives and conservatives) on the eve of a Council already called but never named in a book that, perhaps, owes the broadness of its horizons and the boldness of its reformatory intentions to the climate of expectation aroused by that announcement. On the other hand, it is not to be believed that such a vast subject integrates itself effortlessly or without leaving large areas of shadow. Neither can it be believed that the perpetual assertiveness of the author, so similar to that of her son but without his brilliance, never sounds naive or fanciful. Besides, we should not overlook the fact that Maexie’s theories, just because they are theories, are inconsistent with a “traditional” female universe which in fact she had never really been part of, if for no other reason than her “class privilege,” as her abandonment of the marital home after only few years of marriage shows. This theme has never been touched on in a book that does not hesitate to deal with far more thorny topical questions, and always from a conservative position driven to mysticism. As far as we are directly concerned, it would be above all gratuitous to let readers believe that the theories in the book were simply Ivan’s theories, or derived directly from him, and that he had complete awareness of them, then or later on.

However, having taken these reduction and precautionary measures, the conclusion that stands out when reading what it is not excessive to define as the sinopia of *Gender*, is how in this work Illich has reactivated an interweaving of thoughts necessarily “familiar” to him for a long time. Such thoughts were probably obscured by the overlapping of other urgencies, forgotten perhaps in the meantime, but feverishly found again or reinvented within a few months while probably under the pressure of the double state of exception, historical but no less personal, as we tried to evoke it. It placed him “before the future” again, but a future now perceived as no longer predictable or producible, and alien therefore, for the first time, from any “reformatory” prospect. A deeper “regression” in every sense, for a more adventurous restart in every sense, as they appeared to be to most of the witnesses of his unexpected swerve, finding him, too, unprepared in the face of its consequences.

6.

It is known that after the last of eight sessions of the Berkeley seminar, in autumn 1982, the unease of the female audience, or at least a good part of it, found expression at the symposium called by seven women scholars, six of whom were lecturers at the same university (“Is he taking us for a ride?”). The author of *Gender*, invited and contested, had no more than fifteen minutes to respond to the criticism of the speakers; they considered that he had had twenty-four hours to spread his doctrines, and the count was still heavily in his favour. We don’t know how he got through in these circumstances because, as was his habit, he did not allow his intervention to be recorded (it seems he said “To be taped is to be raped,” to the bewilderment of the onlookers). The opponents limited themselves to publishing only their own interventions in the March 1983 edition of “Feminist Issues.” The fortunes

and misfortunes of the book persistently attached themselves to this episode, feeding each other for a long time in the ambiguous light of a “scandal” both denounced and claimed. Illich himself procured about a thousand copies of the journal with the intention of distributing it to anyone he wished to make aware, in such a paradoxical way, of his own position, as he explained in the *Conversation* with Cayley (in a passage (p. 186) that cannot be read in any of the available translations). He held back at the last minute for a “gender” scruple: “No, a gentleman doesn’t do this.”

Though with differing tones, those first criticisms were total and head-on, a prior obstruction of a book, or a signature, which they showed they considered seriously dangerous. Of course they expressed an immediate rebuff on behalf of a recent and winning movement of women, little prepared to be told from above or from the outside what their mindset should be. But it was also the reaction of an academic system that felt challenged (not simply in its Women’s Studies, but in the whole range of disciplines involved in them, each one with its own “scientific” framework, technical language, specialized literature, happily exempt from any suspicion of bias). And along with that, it was the comforting redress of the democratic, progressive, lay, modernizing etc, self-evidence. In this different balance sheet of the resources in the field, the “tables” were more than turned, and Illich could be victoriously brushed off as a champion of the male-chauvinist reaction in progress, a socio-biologist suspected of having Nazi sympathies, a charlatan in the guise of a scholar, a nostalgic of the good old days that actually never existed, and finally a priest. The reception of *Gender* does not finish here: it was a little more favourable where it was a question of specific prehensibility of certain of its categories, for example in H. T. Wilson’s theoretical sociology; making a double exception is the friendly, timely welcome, in Italy, by Anna Del Bo Boffino, an essayist for the general public. But the tracks retraced more

often by critics had been definitively laid.

On the other hand it would not be fair, polemic excesses aside, to deny that many of the objections originate from one or another of the effective vulnerabilities of the text. Here it is worth lingering on what only after decades can be perceived better: the fact that, ultimately, Illich's speech remains a speech *on* gender but not a "gendered" one ... not "inside" gender. Neither the insurmountable "complementarity" of the two paradigms, nor the alleged impossibility of expressing it other than by "metaphor," prevent him from speaking of his "object" from a "central" and superordinate point of view. It is the viewpoint of the critique of political economy and ideologies connected to it, ultimately a "neutral" one—or rather, if only partial—conducted from a different "biased" perspective: the part of reason against the darkness of superstition, modern superstition, according to a radically "laical" and "Enlightenment" approach that later Illich himself would judge as having been unequal to the challenge.

In this sense it is not a coincidence, and does not let itself be reduced to the (mis)fortunes of the book, that the theme then eclipses from the consideration of the author and, even more so, of his followers. The author of different study campaigns every time, Illich keeps moving the battlefield, though without ever forgetting previous conquests. And on the surface, there is no trace of the central theme of *Gender* in the subsequent studies, that seem to overstep it towards a further depth and elementariness – history of matter, the body, the senses – almost as if the duality of the gender was not that pristine and uncrossable bifurcation professed, at least in places, in the book. In the 1995 foreword he indicates rather in the "history of proportionality" the continuation of the research begun with *Gender*, showing how in this book the basically dynamic motive was that of "asymmetrical" (later on "dissymmetrical") and

more specifically “ambiguous complementarity” between the genders; a motive to be reinvested in a different synthesis, of a mainly ethical character, possibly leaning on certain “gender rests.”

It should be understood in this sense also the reference to a technicality of the Trinitarian theology that Illich introduces a bit cryptically at the end of footnote 56 (annulled, though, by this one and the following footnote 57, in the German edition). In the *relatio subsistens* the stress is not so much for him on the participle, i.e. on the “coming into existence” of the divine hypostases (and therefore, by analogy, of the two genders), as rather on the noun, i.e. on the constitutive relationality of the unique divine (and therefore, proportionally, “human”) nature. This latter does not swallow or assimilate those *personae* as its own “accidents,” but it lets them be in their difference and self- subsistence. Insisting on the analogy with Trinity life: it is not an “immanent duality” that interests Illich mainly, but the “economic duality,” or rather, with his own words, “the constant *incarnation* of the symbolic duality of gender.” (p. 76)

“Symbolic,” here, as opposed to the “biological” of the context, stands for “cultural,” or even “historical-cultural.” The historic occurrence (or loss, or possible recovery) of the constitutive duality of the “human” would be therefore the basic theme of *Gender* and of the subsequent research—ultimately love, and not an ontology of genders. Yet the development in this alternative direction had been glimpsed by Illich, and even foretold as the subsequent step. (footnote 89) We do not know what held him back in his intentions, if the violence of the criticism received (“they made me realize why it would have been impossible for a Jew to speak in Germany – say, in 1934 or 1935 – about racism as a category,” he said somewhat heavily to Cayley) or a deeper difficulty, the necessity to violate-or-succumb to the *mutedness* between the genders (footnotes 56 and 89). In this second case there was a risk of “impotence and silence”

that allows the presentiment of that kind of *pavor* before the inviolability of the individual, the *individuum* that the body closes in the *ineffabile*, which can be perceived as a precise and persistent harmonic in Barbara Duden's reflections – so essential however.

For all this and more still, it is not surprising that the development of *gender studies*, which thrived quickly (the overtaking of the competitor *sex* in the list of academic titles in the English language dates from 1987), managed without Illich's contribution. In none of their variations and nuances would the concepts of gender and sex, even when contrasted, be represented as both corresponding to a social/historical formation—neither when thought of as cultural constructions would they have retained the character of mutual antitheticity. This does not necessarily destine our text to infertility in this field of thought and studies (the claim in the *queer* area recently put forward by Jennifer Levi is striking, for example). But to ward off danger it will be useful to try to circumscribe at least the most serious of the possible misunderstandings.

It springs into action where the revaluation of the “vernacular gender” induces (at least the impression of) an over-determination of the phenomenon, either for a psychological resonance (the very censured “nostalgia”), or for its suspect ideological grasp of the notions of human “nature” or “essence.” But these latter are notions which the author never uses, and not for apophatic caution, nor just because suspicious of an intrinsically “catholic”-modern concept, rising from the obliteration of the original duality. Likely it is in the conviction, an exquisitely “humanistic” one in its own way, that something eminently “symbolic” is in the running here, i.e. something historical-cultural, therefore dynamic, and ultimately *free*: the original “relationality” itself, outside this “economy,” i.e. *unexercised*, would be devoid of content and perhaps not

even expressible. Therefore the reference to the vernacular past does not have a normative value per se, even though, “ideal-typically,” it carries out a decisive function in the deconstruction by genealogical means of that same “human nature” as invented and mythicized by “catholicity”-modernity. It represents rather the place of a possible recommencement, the path that was interrupted in the woods populated by “animal spirits.” Finding it again indeed involves the regression to the “nests of the white Goddess” (p. 134), but it unlocks for itself the renewed possibility of a pertinent symbolic production.

7.

Of course, if things are put this way, a different problem arises—whether an *intrahistorical* criterion can exist, able to judge history itself, and for example decide that a certain one of its phases has an alienating and dehumanizing nature that another one does not, or could not have. *Humani nil*: if the “human” coincides with its *historical* manifestation, how could that which is historical not in turn be *human*, or even degenerate into its *opposite*? Specifically, what effectively enables “complementarity of gender” and “sexual polarization” to hierarchize between themselves, apart from a list of costs and benefits so controversial to be compiled. This is exactly what Sylvie Kwaschin asks the author, in the probably more pondered comment on his book. In recognizing the problem (pp.163-164), Illich refers to “a fleshed-out philosophy of gender that remains to be written” and that, as we already know, he won’t be the one who writes it. Actually, this would have involved a defection from the body of history, in search of atemporal “philosophical” criteria. In Illich’s case, the criterion of value lies instead in a *fact*, also a historical one: the Incarnation of the Word and, even before that, Mary’s “Behold the handmaid of the

Lord.” Without formally denying a transcendence, although this perspective incarnates it materially, irreparably compromising it in the human case. Neither, in consequence, can an alterity occur between a “sacred history” and a “profane” one. Nor can something of what is historical exempt itself from taking a stand, from acquiring a meaning, and loading up the burden of a specific responsibility in relation to that *fact*: which is then precisely the fact of revealed *freedom*, the freedom *to love*, it is understood, and to love not universally, but in a concrete, incarnate proportionality to one’s neighbour – as it opens together the possibility to back out instead, to abstract, to sublimate and to *neutralize*.

How does it happen then, on this basis, that a “story of salvation” is produced which leads straight to hell? This is the *mysterium* that Illich feels obsessively challenged with, and that he must also recall at the start of the 1995 republication of *Gender*, upon annexing the book, and in an eminent position, to this set of problems. He will not have the opportunity to answer that question other than in fragments, ever more penetrating, and imploring. We will not follow him in those abysses. We will simply appeal to a preoccupation that passes through the whole of his work, and not only the written one. It concerns the human pretext of *doing good*, generally and preferably *to others*. In Maexie’s words, it is the pretext of removing the cross from the world, and putting paradise in its place.

[Sept. 2013]

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Occupy Our Kitchens: A New Feminism for Everyone

Peggy Rivage-Seul

When my daughter was a senior at an exclusive women's college, she entered the school competition for a Watson Fellowship. The award gives graduates a generous stipend to pursue projects of personal interest at the international level. Maggie wanted to study vegetarian cooking with women in their own kitchens in Italy, Morocco and India. She argued that home cooked foods are disappearing in the United States because the fast food industry has replaced home cooking. Her project was to gather knowledge and culinary skills to pass on to her own children and those she would one day teach in the public school classroom.

The first round of interviewing involved several faculty members. A dean remarked, "I have trouble with your proposal because McDonald's makes me a better feminist." Evidently, the dean meant that the fast food giant had liberated her from kitchen drudgery. Maggie though taken aback by the dean's comment, mustered the strength to argue the credibility of her project by gently reminding her elders that the school's alumni magazine was about to feature a former graduate who is reviving "slow foods." The graduate was following the lead of Carlo Petrini, who had begun the Slow Food movement in Italy—a movement celebrating the growing and eating of traditional foods that promise health and vitality while healing us from fast food. Maggie's arguments fell on deaf ears.

While the failure to win the Watson did not significantly impact my daughter's life, that moment of truth about food and feminism, captured in the dean's comment, changed the direction of my own feminist scholarship. From that moment on, my reflections and research have focused on the "McDonaldization" of feminism; that is, the relationship of the fast food economy to the women's movement. For the past ten years, I continue to be engaged in research and teaching to "take back the kitchen" from the agribusiness food industry. Too, I am calling for a new wave of feminism to reclaim the domestic sphere, and with it, our sense of community and joy that comes from serving others from the heart of our homes: the kitchen.

Collectively, we have strayed from healthy eating, partly because we live in an historic moment of capitalist enterprise that enslaves us to work harder, with less time to occupy hearth and home. Nevertheless, it is time for us to re-evaluate the way we live, and in particular, the way we eat. The combined health crises of obesity and diabetes implores us to pause. Too, these crises have spread across the world, thanks to the American diet of highly processed, fast foods. Moreover, we are living in a time which has no ethic for limiting our consumption, even when these patterns far exceed the earth's capacity to sustain the American way of life—now having gone global.

Exploring the kitchens of women throughout the Global South—including Mexico, Costa Rica, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and most recently, South India—while following in my daughter's footsteps, I wanted to learn how to produce traditional vegetarian cuisine. Though living in very poor communities, the foods the women I've

encountered create are remarkably rich, both in taste and nutrition.¹ Working with women in the social periphery of the world's economy, I have learned that the future of food and health just might be grounded in their traditional cuisine. Without knowing it, these women are the vanguard for what I am calling the "fourth wave" of visionary feminist resistance against the global food economy. And while this may sound audacious, I believe these food activists to be the leaders for a new feminism that will bring men, women and children to the table of social change.

Not For Women Only

This new wave of feminism is not for women only. In fact, fourth wave feminism is not gender specific. Across the planet though mostly in the Global South, we find that all genders are reclaiming their traditional ways of life that value the vital role that women play in preserving health and the earth's resources. People, working together, are dismantling a 5000 year patriarchy. This ancient system of subordinating women is bred into all of us. And it has produced a world of competition and fear, war and profit, and a debasement of the family and the kitchen. The trajectory of feminism's fourth wave is to go "back to the future" by reclaiming the family and community, as well as the values of love and service that come with it. Fourth wave feminism offers a vision of a new kind of thinking and living that re-prioritizes the way we eat and produce food to sustain the human community.

¹ For the most part, low income women in the Global South prepare vegetarian meals because the cost of meat exceeds their budgets. Most of these women are small farmers whose traditional methods for growing food require less of the earth's resources while providing healthier meals than we derive from the average diet in the United States.

The signs of a fourth wave of feminist resistance are visible in places like Chiapas, Mexico, where indigenous groups have remodeled their communities to reflect a new value system—one that rejects the dominant world view of competition and “win lest you lose.” There, for instance, we find a revolutionary regeneration of an earlier mode of living that respected women as equal partners to men, which lives the centrality of indigenous languages, and that acknowledges the vitality of traditional forms of agriculture and simple, vegetarian cuisine. So often we in the Western “developed” world think of ourselves as more evolved than our “undeveloped” world counterparts. Instead, in places like Chiapas, Mexico, signs of new, post-patriarchal social arrangements provide diverse blueprints—ways forward—for rebalancing the world and ourselves. From the perspective of fourth wave feminism, the kitchen is an important place to start.

Science has done its job of warning the world that our patterns of consumption, especially of processed foods produced by agribusinesses, are taxing the earth in unsustainable ways. Whatever taxes our earth inevitably takes its toll on generations of her inhabitants—the entire web of life of which our bodies are just one element. It is precisely for this reason that I am calling for a visionary global resistance—a new feminism for everyone: to celebrate the leadership of women (and men) at the economic periphery of the global community. We need to re-examine the high cost of eating prepared foods and non-organic meat. We need to take account of the price we are paying in terms of our collective health and the ability of the planet to continue supporting the human population.

In her recent book, *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene*, British feminist Joanna Zylińska reflects on living in the new geological era of the Anthropocene. Scientists have named this epoch for the unique impact of humans on the planet's climate cycles. For Zylińska, negotiating life in the human “Anthropocene” era is a feminist ethical project. Given the heavy footprint of humans on earth, we now have a responsibility to work for the survival of life itself. As such, we need to rethink the way we live, both as individuals and as a species.²

And how do we respond to the feminist call to establish a new relationship to the earth? Our current global crises around climate, health, and food compel us to act collectively to transform the way we think about the earth. We need a critical praxis—an informed moral choice—about how we relate to the earth. This new movement of feminism calls us to revisit the heart of the domestic sphere—the kitchen—as a site for a new form of feminist visionary resistance. Given that the health and well-being of the planet is now controlled by a small number of large corporations, the first act is to change this configuration—to liberate the kitchen, the domestic world, from the hands of the profit driven fast food industry.

To move forward with the notion of feminism's fourth wave, we need to ask ourselves a critical question: how does a highly educated population allow a system of food production, spanning the farm to the table, to degenerate in less than two generations? Certainly, professional women in particular, have had their eyes on a

² Feminist author, Donna Haraway, prefers to conceptualize this new geological era as the Chthulucene, a term that calls on the language of science fiction. She argues in her newest work, *Staying with Trouble*, that humans are not the only species possessed of agency. In fact, human and nonhuman are inextricably linked. Learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying together on a damaged earth will prove more conducive to the kind of thinking that would provide the means to building more livable futures.

different prize, namely, their inclusion within the public sphere where decisions and policy about the well-being of the culture are made. Indeed, the gender gap has narrowed, and now the goal of 50x50, that is, 50% women's public leadership in business and government may be met by 2050. For such an achievement we have women's global movements of resistance to patriarchy to thank for paving the way.

However, the work of feminism is far from over. As long as we continue to live in patriarchal social arrangements, feminists will be called upon to continue the struggle for liberation from institutionalized forms of life-threatening oppressions that include racism, sexism, homophobia, religious intolerance et al. One crucial, and often overlooked, form of human oppression, however, is the international food economy.

This essay on feminism's fourth wave lays both historical and conceptual groundwork for a new ethic in and about the kitchen. Accordingly, it explores the way that the post-World War II women's movement, in its valiant pursuit of gender justice in the workplace, helped to create and perpetuate the conditions for the corporate takeover of women's traditional domain—the kitchen. Tragically, an unintended consequence of second wave feminism was the usurpation of the kitchen by unbridled growth of the fast food economy. To fully understand this undermining of a genuine feminist movement which respected women's work in the home, we must consider the time around the Second World War and to then recall how women have always been charged with moral authority in the care of the family. The work of women has been to nurture—through providing food, medicines, and whatever it takes to ensure the survival of the family. In times of war in the United States, women have been the leaders in preserving and ensuring the food supply, tending to the wounded, and keeping the economy moving.

How Did We Get Here? Unpacking Feminism's Second Wave

Following World War II, the fast food industry entered the portal of the kitchen with Americans' growing affluence. This new wealth ushered in a period of unprecedented levels of consumption. With the success of the postwar economy came a large middle class that could afford to eat out and pay more for processed foods. Thus, the convergence of women's entrance into the professional sphere, the new affluence for the growing white middle class, and the postwar emergence of agribusiness wreaked havoc on women's traditional space: the kitchen.

Prior to 1950, most people's economic circumstances required that they dine on simple grains: corn, rice, wheat, and legumes, including lentils and beans of all varieties. Family gardens were common, especially in rural areas. Normally, when people are poor, they resort to the bottom of the food chain—to grains, beans, and leafy green vegetables to feed themselves. Dried fish, chicken, and eggs complement this basic diet when people can afford to move up the food chain. In the United States, cookbooks from WWII contain special wartime supplements with recipes for these simpler, strong vegetarian foods, while cutting back on expensive consumer items like meat was considered a civic duty during wartime.

Moving out of the Great Depression, the U.S. economy boomed as it produced massive amounts of armaments and raw materials for its battles. From the years 1942-45, women were vital to this effort. While most males who were capable of combat either enlisted or were drafted for military service, the workforce required for weapons production was dominated by women. Yet, at that time, it was not socially acceptable for women to work outside the home. Desperate for workers, the United States government

undertook the most successful advertisement campaign in U.S. history to change cultural norms so that women's work outside the home would become both socially acceptable and laudable.³ The ad campaign helped to recruit 17 million women to wartime industry, while permanently changing the relationship between women and the workplace.



Most feminists will recognize Norman Rockwell's iconic image (above) of Rosie the Riveter as the symbol of female strength for the workplace.

Whether constructing planes or helping to build ships and tanks for men to use in the war against Germany and Japan, women had been moved out of the private space of home into the public space of paid labor. For middle class women who went to work, this often meant a handsome independent income, meals prepared at the work site so that

³ See United States Office of War Information and War Manpower Commissioner, Walter Thompson. The nation's major magazines devoted their September 1943 covers to portrayals of women in war jobs, creating approximately 125 million advertisements. Womanpower ads, most of which were full pages, were among the interior pages of these magazines. Motion pictures, newspapers, radio, trade press, employee publications, and in-store displays all tied in importantly. Even museums participated, with the Museum of Modern Art in New York conducting a contest for the best magazine covers

mothers wouldn't have to worry about cooking when they got home, and community childcare. For working class women, especially women of color, there were no prepared meals or childcare. However, wartime factory work constituted a stiff increase in salary, from low paid domestic and service industry jobs to much higher paid war time work.⁴

Although poor women have been working for wages outside the home since the start of the Industrial Revolution, it wasn't until World War II that the United States experienced a major gender shift in the workplace. In providing leadership—preserving the food supply, tending to the wounded, and keeping the economy moving—women working in traditional male jobs began to feel their strength, while often having a good time in the process. However, the fun didn't last for long.

At the war's end, returning male soldiers expected to come home to their factory jobs operated by female laborers, sometimes more efficiently than their male counterparts. To facilitate the transition, the U.S. government created another advertising campaign, this time to lure women out of their factory jobs and back into the home and hearth. At the end of 1945, the national security narrative suggested that for the sake of the country, women workers needed to go home.⁵

So, Rosie being the good citizen, left her job. Working class women and women of color were forced to find low paying jobs, many of them returning to domestic

⁴ In terms of feminist social movements, it is important to note that the rise of work status for women of color in the United States, and their male counterparts in war combat, created a much higher expectation for justice in the workplace among African Americans in particular. Judith Cohen explained, "There was the feeling that the kinds of slurs, insults, and jokes that people make about minorities had helped lead to Hitler...I think there was a very strong feeling after the war that there wasn't going to be that kind of discrimination again." Segregation began to break down, and the Civil Rights movement started up. See Sharon H. Hartman Strom and Linda P. Wood's "What Did You Do in the War Grandma? An Oral History of Rhode Island Women in World War II," 1994. (This was a special project conducted by an honors English class at Rhode Island's South Kingstown High School, in conjunction with Brown University's Scholarly Technology Group. This project was featured as one of 701 Special Sites in *Third Age*, 1997.

⁵ See the film, "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter" (1980) for graphic examples of the U.S. government's efforts to encourage women's return to the domestic sphere.

work. Middle class women went home to produce babies and gourmet meals. Knowing that this might be boring, media taught women that life could be more interesting if women focused on interior design, and on cooking elaborate, fancy culinary fare, assisted by a burgeoning number of consumer gadgets. Dining rooms replaced kitchen tables because more elaborate feasts would require more formality. Additionally, it took more time to prepare fancy meals. As a result, the cooks had less time to reflect on the way their lives had been changed since vacating their jobs.

Yet, the memory of Rosie the Riveter died hard. As Wood and Strom remind us, the genie was out of the bottle—women now felt compelled to work outside the home:

“... demand exploded in the post-war boom. Prices sky-rocketed with the removal of price controls, forcing many women to stay on the job to help buy things their families needed. The "American dream," so long dormant during the Depression and war, now became a reality as many families found it possible to buy a home in the suburbs, a car, a refrigerator, a washing machine, and to have children and to give them everything their parents had been deprived of for so long.”⁶

While some women found their moral authority in raising families, cooking, and house cleaning, it was not enough for others. In her classic text, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Freidan labeled women’s ennui as “the problem that has no name.” This undercurrent in the white middle class eventually gave rise to the Second Wave of Feminism in the United States, resulting in structural changes in the workplace. New doors opened for women— from corporate offices to university doctoral programs. Unlike the war campaign that called on women’s patriotism to join the labor force, the media campaign to bring women back to the home was less successful. Although many

⁶ See Hartman Strom and Woods.

young women temporarily left the work place, in general, married women's labor force participation continued to rise after the war, and has been rising ever since.

As formally educated women went to work, they left the kitchen behind. It did not remain unoccupied for long, however. As the U.S. rebooted itself for postwar domestic activity, the food industry took a giant leap in production by creating convenience foods and kitchen appliances that made cooking easier. Improved highways and transportation made available a great variety of food. Freezers became affordable so that women could store prepared dinners, frozen vegetables, and meats— in sum making it easier to move away from cooking with fresh foods. Soon, McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken would replace local diners.

In conjunction with advertising and media, the fast food industry worked hard to promote a new food culture. Using the science of psychology and the manipulative power of marketing—within newspapers, women's magazines, on the radio and television, and even in school children's "Weekly Readers"—people became convinced, talked into experimenting with highly starchy, salty, sugary, oily foods that had a "fun taste." Vegetables, grains, fruits, and meats began to taste the same as desserts instead of strong, plain food. As a result, a craving for sugar and starch replaced the body's desire for nutritious, healthy food— for whole grains, fruits and vegetables— thus undermining the health and wellness of everyone.

In addition, poor people, like their privileged counterparts, were watching TV, reading magazines, and listening to the radio. Cruising past drive-in restaurants, they, too, were being enculturated into the fast food reality. Too, fast food culture promoted the idea of a classless society since everyone, rich or poor, could eat the same diet. Having

once tasted a Big Mac and French fries, few were likely to “go back” to whole grains, legumes, greens and broccoli—the kinds of food that actually support well-being rather than disease (heart, diabetes, et al.)—what Francine Kaufman in *Hungry Planet* calls “diabesity.” Within the short span of fifty years, a new national habit of eating fast foods had been established, with the basic diet of healthy food lost. The aftermath of this transformation of American eating patterns is clear: nearly 10% of Americans now have diabetes.⁷ Childhood obesity, rising exponentially, results from the lethal confluence of consumer pressure, wide availability and desirability of fast foods, and the appeal of quick meals in a busy world.

Tragically, the current health crisis is not confined to the United States. We know that “diabesity” has spread from the United States across the globe as people embrace processed foods. And, with increasingly polluted sources of drinking water, soft drinks like Coca Cola have replaced the more dangerous alternative of contaminated water. Unlike in the United States, few social safety nets exist for coping with these major food-related health issues that increasingly plague the world’s majority, most of whom are women and children.

The Birth of the Global Food Economy

Emerging from World War II, the United States was the uncontested winner. The traditional global powers—England, France, Germany, Spain and Italy—having suffered heavy casualties from the global war, were unable to sustain their own economies. This

⁷ See the 2014 National Diabetes Statistics Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/data/statistics/2014StatisticsReport.html>

was especially true for the European colonies within Africa and Asia. America's post-war challenge became one of converting its wartime economy of military production into a more productive industry to grow its national economy. Agribusiness helped to fill the production gap left by the war. Within a few years, the U.S. was overproducing grains, re-routing the chemical industry to industrial agriculture, and looking to establish markets in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America for selling its surplus production. In this historical moment, the United States was positioning itself to assume economic leadership in the world. Decision-makers debated their course of action, as the following quote by George Kennan, then Secretary of State in the United States, illustrates:

We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population ... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world benefaction.⁸

Several years later, in 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law "PL 480 Agricultural Surplus Disposal Act" which gave the Global South the opportunity to buy grains (corn, wheat, etc.) at very low prices, using their own local currencies. PL 480 is also known as the "Food for Peace Program" which enabled former colonies to buy corn and wheat without borrowing foreign currency, thus saving the high cost of exchanging *pesos, cordobas, colones or lempiras* for dollars.⁹ To keep the U.S. economy moving,

⁸ Taken from a confidential, internal State Dept. document in 1948, this quote appears in F. William Engdahl's, *Gods of Money: Wall Street and the Death of the American Century*, 2009, p.225 (edition.engdahl).

⁹ The year 1954, however, is a landmark in the history of the idea of Food for Peace. The whole concept was given a new orientation as a result of the passing of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, commonly known as Public Law 480. This act provided for sales using foreign currencies, donations, and barter of surplus U. S. farm commodities. Recently, the act was amended to permit sales of surplus commodities for dollars on a

agribusinesses in the United States could sell their grain, but instead of exchanging local currencies for dollars, local monies were re-invested in countries purchasing grains. For example, the *rupees* that India spent buying wheat went back into the Indian economy in the form of U.S. government investments and land purchases. The idea was to expand U.S. markets, and at the same, provide development and employment opportunities for poor countries. Multinational corporations with plants and offices in the Global South would hire locally and provide industrial products that would serve an ailing third world economy. At least this was the “officially” sanctioned story.

However, George Kennan’s sentiments regarding the importance of exploiting Third World economies for U.S. national interests are more indicative of the economic consequences of PL 480. When Haitian farmers brought their local rice to market, they could not compete with the artificially low prices of rice imported from the United States through the Food for Peace Program. The result was that Haitian farmers were forced out of business. Haiti, along with many economies in the Global South, became food dependent on the United States. Once these countries became dependent on the United States for their grains, they were then forced to pay international market prices when the surpluses ran out. Such circumstances required expensive bank loans. Finally, the debt needing repayment, countries were required to make payments in foreign, expensive currency. In the end, the “Food for Peace Program” helped to usher in the un-payable

long-term loan basis and at low rates of interest. See Douglas Hedley and David Peacock. “Food for Peace, PL: 480 and American Agriculture,” Report No. 156, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University, February 1970.

external debt that both crippled economies in the Global South and turned the United States into an unchallenged superpower in the latter half of the twentieth century.¹⁰

A High Price to Pay

More than just the Global South has paid a high price for the U.S. agricultural production boom. Excess production of grains like corn needed to go somewhere, so conveniently it was steered into the U.S. food industry. There corn syrup replaced the more expensive granulated sugar for over 75% of processed food items in major grocery stores. While corn surplus enriched the processed food companies, it simultaneously impoverished the population in terms of nutrition, while creating a totally unnecessary health crisis.¹¹ We can accurately talk about the “hungry American” as someone who eats a processed food diet, depleted of the nutrition found in whole foods. Further exacerbating the impoverishment, the poor and people of color largely live in areas with a dearth of fresh fruit and vegetable markets, leaving them much hungrier and much unhealthier than their wealthier counterparts. Taken in combination, the daily project of satiating the nutritional needs of one’s family becomes a nearly impossible task for too many. The poor become poorer in both the United States and the Global South. And we all become more compromised in health and well-being.

¹⁰ I was fortunate to have dinner with the late George McGovern who authored the “Food for Peace” program. When I shared the perspective above with him, his response was: “We didn’t get that one right.”

¹¹ To give an idea of the acreage used for corn production, in 2010, 82 million acres were cultivated in corn, representing 27% of agriculture in the U.S. According to 2008 figures (the year of the world food crisis), 43% of the corn crop was used to feed domestic animals, 15% exported (a huge decrease because of the U.S. decision to grow bio-fuels, thus triggering a corn crisis in Latin America), and 12% was processed, ending up in 45,000 food items found on grocery shelves. See Oran B. Hesterman. *Fair Food*, 2012. pp. 4-6.

The tragedy of the current global food economy is even starker relief when recognizing that the rich fields of grain in the United States have been used to generate enormous profits, instead of feeding the human community. When we begin to understand how the international food economy works against human need, then we will embrace a critical feminist praxis—feminism’s fourth wave—to undo the fast food revolution.

Going Back to the Future: “Occupy Our Kitchens”

The task of this new movement is to reclaim the domestic sphere by re-centering families and communities around food production and consumption. Ivan Illich’s work *Gender* (1980) is an important starting point for theorizing fourth wave feminism. There Illich sketches an historical picture of gender relationships in the domestic sphere, arguing that male/female relationships have long been dominated by egalitarian and complementary, mutually respectful relations. It is only in the recent historical epoch of capitalist industrialism that gender relations have focused on inequalities in the work place and neglecting egalitarian housework practices.

However, since the publication of Illich’s work on gender, we have witnessed significant advances—the beginning of a revolution of sorts—typified by actions now occurring within Zapatista communities throughout Mexico. Here we see evidence of gender practices that may take us into a post-patriarchal epoch. Going back to the future signifies the important study of the human domestic past as a guidepost for reconstructing a future that, in the words of Latin American economist/theologian Franz Hinkelammert,

“includes us all.” As the work of feminism’s fourth wave unfolds, we are likely to look to Zapatista women to lead the way to new gender practices.

“Occupy our Kitchens” is a call for the co-construction of a manifesto that moves the slow food revolution forward with every morsel we savor, healing the damage of the fast food revolution to our bodies, ourselves, our places and others’ places. Fourth wave feminism is dawning even as I write these hopes and dreams here and now.

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**Ivan Illich's Radical Thought
and the Convivial Solution to the Ecological Crisis**

Claudio de Majo

Over the last decades our world has been threatened by multiple environmental issues that have generated debates over the future survival of the human species on this planet: climate change, ocean acidification, ozone depletion, the emission of phosphorous and nitrogen in the atmosphere, the non-orthodox management of toxic waste, the exhaustion of food and water supplies, the loss of biodiversity and the destruction of ecosystems, are only some of the main issues. (Foster, 2010; Bollier, 2013) The impact of these multiple issues has led modern science to formulate the existence of a new geological era for our planet, the *anthropocene*, in order to indicate the central role played by humans in the balance of life on earth.

Although from a purely scientific perspective the causes enumerated herein seem to provide a thorough overview of the main risk factors that might determine the next environmental crises, it is necessary however to assess the historical causes that have led humanity to the verge of catastrophe. Particularly important is to analyze the controversial relationship between man and nature over the course of history. The current alienation of humanity from the ecosphere has indeed historical causes that are motivated by the evolution of accumulation processes from ‘The First Great Transition’—that is, the invention of agriculture roughly 12,000 years ago—to industrial capitalism. (Pointing, 2007; Kovel, 2002) As shown by environmental history, although human-environment controversies are present since the dawn of

organized societies, capitalism has played a central role in exacerbating these issues. The dynamics of capitalist accumulation, the relentless extraction and transformation of natural resources into goods and products necessary to achieve “growth” and “development”¹—these are but a few examples of the role played by capitalism.

It is indeed evident that the evolution of capitalism over the last centuries has resulted in a consistent intensification of the volume of environmental issues thereby highlighting the conflict between production processes and the survival of the human race. These processes were emphasized by Karl Marx, who pointed out that the relentless drive for profit through the production of *surplus* that characterizes industrial capitalism is embedded in an economic system where exchange-value is preferred to use-value and where workers are disempowered by their lack of control over the means of production. According to Marx, this endemic dynamic of capitalism generates a relentless expansion of economic production way beyond the goals previously accomplished, and as a consequence the uncontrolled and intensive extraction of natural resources relentlessly push the environmental balance of our planet to the brink of ecological crisis. (Kovel, 2002, pp. 28-48) The dynamic of capitalistic accumulation described by Marx is therefore the cause of a “metabolic rift,” or the alienation between man and environment. (Kovel, 2002, p.129) A primal consequence of this metabolic rift is what James O’Connor has defined as the second contradiction of capitalism—indicative of its inherent ecologically destructive actions. Indeed, apart from creating social inequalities by polarizing the means of production—the so-called first contradiction of capitalism—O’Connor points out how the current system also impairs the natural conditions of production, generating

¹ For more information over the relation between man and nature in human evolution, the following books are suggested: Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, New York 1999 e *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, New York 2006; Clive Ponting, *A Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations* e Ian Simmons, *Global Environmental History, 10,000 BC to AD 2000*, Edinburgh 2008.

ecological crises that contribute to the decrease of profitability and to accumulation of crises. (Foster, 2009, pp. 203-209) Although Marx's concept of metabolic rift is mainly related to trends of industrial capitalism developed from the end of the eighteenth century, following Fernand Braudel's historical analysis of the dynamics of capitalist accumulation, it is possible to extend this phenomenon to multiple eras of human history. (Braudel, 1977) As pointed out by Henri Pirenne, "... for each period into which our economic history may be divided, there is a distinct and separate class of capitalists"; in other words, every stage of human history has been characterized by the rise of an economically-wise hegemonic class that has replaced an old order and favored new socio-environmental transitions. (Pirenne, 1914, p. 494) Therefore, analyzing the history of organized societies, it is possible to detect economic mechanisms based on the accumulation of labor and natural resources through the indiscriminate exploitation of the environment.

However, over history, human-environment relations have also enjoyed more harmonious ecological-economic configurations, both in the management of natural resources and in the accumulation of surplus from the ecosystem in order to ensure human survival. Actually, more than an economic model, it is probably more appropriate to talk about a homogeneous set of secular values and practices that have permeated the existence of every organized society, articulating their lifestyle, their relations with the natural world and consequently determining their times of action and of existence. This complex universe of traditions and habits is known under the term of "commons."

According to Jonathan Rowe, one of the main scholars of commons over the last decades, commons are first of all a complex social system of interactions between humans, natural resources, and properties, where the first two play a much more

important role than properties. (Rowe, 2013, p. 103) Although nowadays the universe of commons has expanded to other social spheres, such as culture, science and digital technologies, natural resources constitute the most ancient and important form of common property, incorporating assets like air, water, sun, trees that are of vital importance for the survival of the human species and of life in general. Moreover, they are proof of the indissoluble bond between mankind and nature, which by far are much more important than the connection between humans and markets, that many times have been responsible for the spoliation and expropriation of commons.

Hence, within the idea of commons lies the possibility of promoting environmental sustainability on a global scale, connecting the universe of collective properties to ecological thought. If the socio-environmental system of resources management typical of commons has been gradually subdued to market dynamics, nowadays the crisis of contemporary capitalism is favoring a new springtime for the universe of collective properties. First, numerous historical studies have shown the validity and the importance of commons over history.² Second, social inequalities and the worsening of environmental threats that nowadays are wracking the globalized world are also bringing back the model of commons into the agendas of politicians and activists worldwide. (Bollier, 2014)

The Triple-Helix Model: Commons As A Tool for The Promotion of Green Governance Strategies

In order to understand the complex universe of the commons and its relation to ecology, it is necessary to distinguish between *common-pool resources* and *commons*.

² An example is the famous study by Paolo Grossi, *Un altro modo di possedere*. The book retraces the history of commons in the European juridical tradition, highlighting the ideals that, since the end of the 19th century, have shown the natural character of collective properties and their utility in Italian economic dynamics, in opposition to the mainstream tendency of the time, based upon agrarian individualism and private property.

“Common-pool resources” include a set of natural resources available for potential users that are distributed on a multi-scalar geographical perspective according to their characteristics. (Bollier, 2013; Rowe, 2013; Grassi, 1977) The expression “commons” includes instead a regime of administration of common-pool resources based on common property agreements through self-organization and the autonomous management of resources by the community. (Bollier, 2013) As for natural commons, it is possible to describe them as a geographical area whose resources are shared by the local community following a set of pre-established rules. (Martinez-Alier, 2003, p. 74)

According to this approach, it is possible to divide the universe of commons into six general categories: subsistence commons, indigenous commons, digital commons, social/civic commons, market commons and state commons. (Bollier, 2013, p. 158) Thus, the universe of commons combines the management of common-pool resources with other forms of natural and digital resource management such as private property or with centralized planning policies, thus creating a new economy that does not reject the role of markets, only condemning its most predatory aspects. (Bollier, 2014, p. 5). In other words, Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom’s work has constituted a milestone in promoting a positive approach to commons, in contrast to the neoclassical Hardinian “tragedy of the commons” approach showing how collective forms of resource management have been common to numerous human societies in different historical, geographical and cultural contexts. (Bollier, 2013, p. 148)³

³ In the academic literature, the idea of the inadequacy of the commons as a resource management system at the base of human societies was popularized by the famous essay, *The Tragedy of the Commons*, written in 1968 by biologist Garret Hardin. Hardin attempted to demonstrate the failure of commons in managing resources, as they were destined to crash against the rational and predatory nature of human beings. However, without beginning a debate on the dialectic nature of the human species, continuously shifting between altruism and egoism, it is evident that the pessimistic scenario described by Hardin presents a superficial vision of human existential dynamics. As observed by environmentalist and cultural studies advocate, E.P. Thompson, Hardin’s analysis

As for the relation between commons and the environment, Ostrom's vision basically considers commons as a sustainable modality for the management of natural resources that would preserve the long-term livability of the environment and foster legal and political reforms based on participation, social equality and sustainability. It is not a coincidence that nowadays the main interpretation of commons sees them as a tool for the promotion of a *green governance* model that implies overriding the traditional state-market dualism, proposing a triarchic model that associates the already renowned influence of states and markets to those of commons. (Bollier, 2013, p. 195) In other words, commons are seen as the privileged vehicle for the creation of a green governance regime that would ensure the observance of environmental rights from a local, regional, national and global point of view, through the creation of an innovative legal system based on traditional practices and institutional reforms aimed at promoting direct democracy. (Bollier, 2013, p. 19)

Following this pattern, many associations and funds for the preservation and sustainable management of natural resources have been developed, in order to preserve the environment from classical capitalistic short-term mechanisms. A valid example is the *Pacific Forest Trust* in the United States, promoting the protection of forests from indiscriminate clearance of arboreal species thanks to the legal acquisition of the right of utilization over the territory, rights that are never exercised. (Rowe, 2013, p. 98) Here, the endemic tension between the qualities and characteristics expressed by proponents of commons and those of markets emerges with particular evidence. (Bollier, 2013, p. 145)

mirrors a pro-market vision of the world that ignores entire centuries of history of successful resource management based on commons and promoted by self-organized communities. Indeed, as Thompson has observed, commoners "were not without common sense," as they organized their own community around collective properties thanks to positive human qualities such as altruism, conviviality, and common sense, characteristics that are proper of human nature as much as the cynic rationalism described by Hardin.

Although still maintaining a strong communitarian component as well as a certain heterodoxy compared to purely capitalist resource management models, the commons approach to sustainability shows interest in ideals corresponding to what Martinez-Alier has defined as the “gospel of eco-efficiency.” This is a liberal idea of environmentalism whose aims are mainly concentrated on the attempt to promote sustainable development and management models, without however questioning the basic assumptions of capitalist market economy. (Martinez-Alier, 2003, p. 14) In addition to placing side by side commons with states and markets, advocates of this school of thought also theorize the substantial dependence of commons on states and markets, as they represent an hybrid form of property. (Bollier, 2014, p. 69)

Commons According to Ivan Illich

The mainstream vision of commons as an integrated tool of contemporary market economy for the promotion of green governance finds opposition in Ivan Illich’s theories on conviviality and communitarism. According to the Austrian thinker, the universe of commons can be interpreted as a complex set of convivial subsistence practices for the management of natural resources, administered through a complex system of non-written laws. As the author describes them:

People called commons those parts of the environment for which customary law exacted specific forms of community respect. People called commons that part of the environment which lay beyond their own thresholds and outside of their own possessions, to which, however, they had recognized claims of usage, not to produce commodities but to provide for the subsistence of their households. The customary law which humanized the environment by establishing the commons was usually unwritten. It was unwritten law not only because people did not care to write it down, but because what it protected was a reality much too complex to fit into paragraphs. The law of the commons regulated the right of way, the right to fish and to hunt, to graze, and to collect wood or medicinal plants in the forest. (Illich, 1992, p. 49)

Thus, commons form the core of a society centered on subsistence activities related to an idea of community and it emerges as a set of vernacular practices enhancing the convivial side of human relations, in contrast with the mainstream vision that considers it as a simple political and legislative tool. As observed by Illich, the term “vernacular” has an Indo-Germanic derivation that corresponds to the word “root,” indicating the connection with past local cultures. This word was later adopted by the Latin language with the expression *vernaculum*, indicating an object produced or generated in a domestic environment, in contrast to those obtained through market exchange. (Illich, 1981, p. 57) In this vision, it is not the complementarity between commons and markets that is the key for solving the main contradictions and plagues affecting the capitalist system. Rather, the solution lies in the individuation of the limits to capitalist development and the substitution of the means of industrial production with convivial tools. As Illich has observed,

The alternative to managerial fascism is a political process by which people decide how much of any scarce resource is the most any member of society can claim; a process in which they agree to keep limits relatively stationary over a long time, and by which they set a premium on the constant search for new ways to have an ever larger percentage of the population join in doing ever more with ever less. Such a political choice of a frugal society remains a pious dream unless it can be shown that it is not only necessary but also possible: (1) to define concrete procedures by which more people are enlightened about the nature of our present crisis and will come to understand that limits are necessary and a convivial life style desirable; (2) to bring the largest number of people into now suppressed organizations which claim their right to a frugal life style and keep them satisfied and therefore committed to convivial life; and (3) to discover and revalue the political or legal tools that are accepted within a society and learn how to use them to establish and protect convivial life where it emerges. Such procedures may sound idealistic at the present moment. This is not proof that they cannot become effective as the present crisis deepen. (Illich, 1973, p. 25)

As shown by Illich, the restoration of convivial values in modern society through a radical political process would allow the creation of a new triadic relation between individuals, means of production and collectivity. The main aim of commons

therefore should be the creation of a convivial society, where technology could be adopted not in order to enhance the separation between individuals, society and the environment, but to realign the human sphere to society and the eco-system, thus improving in a crucial way relations between individuals (Illich, 1973, p. xii). The convivial society theorized by Illich is grounded in a less hierarchical vision of society and implies collective and communitarian patterns of production. In this sense, the idea of commons as the vehicle for the promotion of vernacular and convivial values promoted by Illich, retraces simple and essential anti-capitalist and communitarian values that have characterized several indigenous societies in the course of human history. As Gustavo Esteva has observed, “[Illich] 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.” (Esteva, 2015, p. 76)

The Great Transformation of the Commons and Its Socio-environmental Consequences

According to Illich, the root of the transition from convivial societies based on natural commons to modern industrial capitalism revolving around private properties lies in socio-economic and technological transformations that happened in the western world beginning in the Middle Ages. The starting point of all experts on commons is the assumption that during the feudal era, before the triumph of capitalism over collective properties, farmers enjoyed land rights comparable to owners with the only difference being that the lands were available for use to all the farmers dwelling in the

area. (Rowe, 2013, p. 44) Nevertheless, Illich's analysis encompasses socio-economic and cultural changes that occurred among European societies during the Middle Ages, eventually leading to the rise of capitalism and to the wrecking of convivial societies. (Illich, 1973, p. 17)

In particular, drawing from the first contradiction of capitalism formulated by Karl Marx—that is, the separation of the workers from the means of production—Ilich points out how capitalism implied the cancellation of convivial cultures from the past whose lifestyle was based on subsistence activities, in favor of a society based on market economy, large-scale production, waged work, and technological tools of production. Hence, Illich's idea is that “in both theory and practice all development means the transformation of subsistence-oriented cultures and their integration into an economic system. Development always entails the expansion of a formally economic sphere at the expense of subsistence-oriented activities.” (Illich, 1992, p. 21)

Naturally, this phenomenon provoked several socio-environmental issues that affected mainly low-income classes that were frozen out from modernization processes, as their survival was seriously threatened by the privatization of commons. As observed by Illich:

The modern age 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, p. 139)

The main phenomenon that can be observed in the transformation from the convivial culture of commons to the so-called *enclosures* movement, is the creation of

a production-oriented culture based on the concept of resource scarcity and on mechanisms of differential inclusion. This process has been defined by Illich as the “hierarchical modernization of poverty,” a global trend consisting in the combination of a “lack of power over circumstances with a loss of personal potency.” (Illich, 1971, p. 4) In modern societies this goal was accomplished with the approval of political institutions that acted through the already mentioned tools for social control such as languages and conventional education. (Illich, 1971, p. 15-21)

Here, the affinity of the Austrian thinker with Karl Marx is very evident, especially in relation to the issues concerning the separation between workers and means of production and the consequent phenomenon of alienated labor.⁴ Therefore, drawing from Marx, Illich coined the concept of the “industrialization of man,” or the normalization of production schemes conventionally known under the definition of “work.” However, such a transformation cannot be considered anymore as the simple action of “working,” but as one of the tools of a society founded on hierarchical political and legislative schemes and on the centralization of production dynamics in the hands of a privileged elite of capitalists. (Illich 1973, p. 96-97)

This historical process created an unequal division of labor that fostered the consolidation of an hegemonic class capable of redirecting production schemes through unilateral accumulation, the exploitation of labor, the idea of scarcity and the polarization of social classes according to mechanisms of differential inclusion. (Illich, 1973, p. 74) This process implied a total control of the main moments of industrial production, both in regard to resource supply or *input*, and of production, or *output*. In turn, this generated what Illich defines as “the worst form of

⁴ As observed by Gustavo Esteva, although today Marxists tend not to read Illich and vice versa, “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.” (Esteva, 2015, pp. 77-78)

discrimination”: the hierarchical economic organization of society, or the division between rich and poor people. (Illich, 1973, p. 74) The result of this process today is an anthropic reality, a “man-made environment” based on hierarchical mechanisms that are hard to decipher for mankind. As observed by Illich, “the man-made environment has become as inscrutable as nature is for the primitive.” (Illich, 1971, p. 35)

Naturally, the hierarchical division of modern society also permeated a series of socio-cultural spheres that are very important for the articulation of times and modalities of material life and that have created a series of “radical monopolies.” Radical monopolies are a system of domination over products and services that are not simply restricted to the choices of beneficiaries, as they constitute the only instrument for controlling and satisfying needs while at the same time nullifying the development of feasible alternatives. (Illich, 1973, p. 55) Moreover, radical monopolies also exercise psychological control over the individual, creating a new dimension of subjection: “psychological impotence, the inability to fend for themselves.” (Illich, 1971, p. 4) Obviously, this process has been responsible for serious environmental damage. Too, the destruction of convivial societies has permeated every aspect of society, eliminating all forms of communitarian practices.

The normalization of the individual and the production of new human subjectivities corresponding to a market logic grounded in exploitation has been implemented through a series of devices for social control. As pointed out by Illich, today mankind moves and expresses its own vitality through a “pan-hygienic world: a world in which all contacts between men, and between men and their world, are the result of foresight and manipulation.” (Illich 1971, p. 47) The main pan-hygienic spheres described by Illich are language, the education system, science and

centralized planning. Throughout history, these spheres have functioned as tools for social control and the manipulation of human consciousness.

This phenomenon has also been defined by Illich as “shadow work,” or a form of contribution to the capitalist economy that is not easily detectable through traditional quantitative/qualitative analysis, but that produces tangible effects that emerge in the form of invisible discrimination and indirect social control. (Illich, 1981, pp. 100-101) In order to clarify the meaning as well as the significant implications of shadow work, Illich has indicated four main mystifications—or masks—that apply to it: 1) the relegation of women to marginal or subordinated tasks in modern societies masked as an appeal to biology; 2) social activities that, although produce benefits for people, are considered to be non-productive and therefore receive little or no acknowledgement; 3) the assignment of shadow prices to behaviors and practices normally out of the economic market, such as crime, leisure, learning and fertility; and 4) the unequal management of the job market according to the category of gender. (Illich, 1981, pp. 108-109) Among these categories, it is evident that the main and most ancient tool for social control was language, the privileged instrument in providing essential values for the creation of community based on equality and democracy. (Illich, 1973, p. 99)

Retracing the history of language from its origins to our days, Illich shows how human societies formed around “vernacular” practices were able to utilize different idioms that were learned through their direct practice.⁵ On the contrary, modern nation-states have codified their own national language, also known as “mother tongue” that nowadays is taught in all modern schools. Therefore, the transition from vernacular languages learned through direct interaction, to mother

⁵ As explained by Illich, the word *vernacular* has an Indo-Germanic origin and it was used to express concepts such as “root” or “household”; whereas in Latin the word *vernaculum* was used in order to describe any object born, grown or created among the domestic walls. Further information are available in Illich, 1981, p. 57.

tongues taught in schools represents the most significant step in the creation of capitalist modernity: from subsistence societies based on use-value, to centralized planning for the creation of monetary affluence through markets. (Illich, 1981, p. 44)

In other words, one of the main steps in the transition from a social order based on subsistence to the capitalist modernity was the transformation of languages from expression of a shared socio-cultural identity to a tool of cultural hegemony aimed at helping people orient themselves within the controversial and de-humanizing landscapes of modernity. (Illich, 1981, p. 63)

It is not a coincidence that the term “mother tongue” was adopted for the first time during the Carolingian era by a group of Catholic monks from Gorz Abbey, close to the French city of Verdun, replacing Latin as the official language for religious functions when speaking from the pulpit.⁶ Therefore, as Illich has reminded, “*mother tongue*, since the term was first used, has never meant the vernacular, but rather its contrary.” (Illich, 1981, p. 58) Why the concept of “mother tongue” was formulated in this period lies in the need to accomplish social control, the extension of territorial claims and the consolidation of hegemony through language that culminated in the codification of vernacular languages. Indeed, the Abbey of Gorz was the center of a real technological revolution that had crucial importance for the imperialistic expansion of Europe. For instance, the invention of the horse-led plow allowed those who controlled such innovative means of production to go beyond mere subsistence, favoring a better crop rotation and consequently to achieve wealth accumulation and economic profit. Illich writes,

It seems quite probable that Gorz was then at the center of the diffusion of a new technology that was crucial for the later imperial expansion of European powers: the transformation of the horse into the tractor of choice. Four Asiatic inventions – the horseshoe, the fixed saddle and stirrup, the bit and the

⁶ It is indeed during the Carolingian that society started to be increasingly based on institutions and as a consequence priests started to be seen as professional educators and school teachers. (Illich, 1981, p. 59)

cummett (the collar resting on the shoulder) – permitted important and extensive changes. One horse could replace six oxen. While supplying the same traction, and more speed, a horse could be fed on the acreage needed for one yoke of oxen. Because of its speed, the horse permitted a more extensive cultivation of the wet, northern soils, in spite of the short summers. Also, greater rotation of crops was possible. But even more importantly, the peasant could now tend fields twice as far away from his dwelling. A new pattern of life became possible. [...] In these circumstances, the monks of Gorz, made language, vernacular language, into an issue to defend their territorial claims. The monks began to preach in Frankish, and spoke specifically about the value of the Frankish tongue. They began to use the pulpit as a forum to stress the importance of language itself, perhaps even to teach it. (Illich, 1981, p. 62)

In addition, Illich mentions the Catholic king, Alphonse of Aragon, the first king who decided to adopt a vernacular language as the tool for communicating with his people. Illich notes the attempt of Spanish linguist, Elio Antonio de Nebrija, to convince Queen Elizabeth of Castilla of the importance of language as a tool for social control to be accompanied by institutional power—the so-called merging of *armas y letras*. These examples show how the formation of the first modern European state lie not only in the economic changes following the discovery of the American continent and to the authority of the Church and the State, but also in the role of language as a cultural device for consolidating hegemony. (Illich, 1981, p. 36-37)

Evidence of the nexus between the standardization of vernacular language and the advance of modernity during this historical era was supported by the invention of industrial printing that allowed the capillary diffusion of texts thereby fostering propaganda. (Illich, 1981, p. 40) The advance of modernization processes in the Spanish kingdom represented, according to Illich, the first official declaration of war on subsistence waged by modern States endeavoring to increase their affluence through economic and socio-cultural reforms. (Illich, 1992, p. 16) Therefore, if the transition from material life sustained by commons to a capitalist economy was fueled by the economic breakthrough that Karl Polanyi defined as “The Great

Transformation,” Illich demonstrates how forms of social control such as language and instruction through schooling were able to consistently foster this process. In other words, we might affirm that to the geographic enclosures, Illich added precious insights over the development of the enclosures of the mind.

Beyond Sustainability and Ecology: Conviviality and The Creation of A Sustainable Society

Drawing from past socio-economic experiences, Illich explains how historically, human civilizations were based on a set of non-written rules, known as vernacular laws, reflecting traditional activities and ways of living. However, as already shown, the development of the enclosure movement resulted in an irreversible alteration of land regulation and property relations and in a radical change in the relationship between mankind and the environment. The progressive destruction of commons that followed was the basis for the construction of a new ecological order, mirroring a “radical change in the attitudes of society towards the environment.” (Illich, 1992, p. 50) It is not a coincidence indeed that the beginning of the “Age of Reason” in the Anglo-Saxon world during the 17th century and the consequent rise of the enclosure movement also coincided with the rise of the ecological movement. (Worster, 1977, pp. 2-3)

However, in Illich we find his recognition of the contradictions within contemporary environmentalism and ecology in general. The main issue within the environmental movement according to his analysis lies in the lack of foresight in assessing the main historical cause of the current ecological issues that today are wracking our world: the dispossession of commons. (Illich, 1992, p. 53) In this sense, sustainability and ecology are concepts constructed by modern society in order to

justify and defend a world of socio-economic inequalities and relentless consumption. (Illich, 2015, p. 16) In fact, in modern capitalist societies, energy constitutes one of the main tools for social control, as it is connected to concepts such as “crisis” and “scarcity” that determine the creation of a stratified society following the principle of differential inclusion:

The assumption of scarcity is fundamental to economics, and formal economics is the study of values under this assumption. But scarcity, and therefore all that can be meaningfully analyzed by formal economics, has been of marginal importance in the lives of most people through most of history. The spread of activity into all aspects of life can be chronicled; it has occurred in European civilization since the Middle Ages. Under the expanding assumption of scarcity, peace acquired a new meaning, one without precedent anywhere but in Europe. Peace came to mean *pax æconomica*. *Pax æconomica* is a balance between formally ‘economic’ powers. (Illich, 1992, p. 19)

Modern society with its traditional values is therefore the main obstacle in achieving a convivial society based on commons that would prevent “the expansion of scarcity perceptions within a community.” (Illich, 1992, p. 10) The *pax æconomica* introduced as a means of protection of the European modernity is considered by Illich as a zero-sum game, where social and economic disparities are guaranteed by mechanisms of differential inclusion that are intrinsic to capitalism. Moreover, the modern capitalist order has created a clash between human and environmental interests generating a situation where “by the rules of the zero-sum game, both the environment and human work are scarce stakes; as one gains the other loses.” (Illich, 1992, p. 23) In this regard, Illich points out that, on a metabolic level, going beyond a certain threshold of energy consumption is functional to the creation of a technocratic society, where the means of production are not directly controlled by the worker but by the few people that really retain control over the means of production. The preservation of this privilege is mainly possible thanks to the narrative of “resource

scarcity” promoted and fostered by mainstream politics. According to this vision, important sources of energy are on the verge of exhaustion and therefore it is necessary to adopt strict forms of control of human energy that have to be channeled in firm production schemes.

Obviously, this process is responsible for the mechanization of energy production as well as for the exploitation of human energy as a mechanical source of power. Hence, in modern capitalistic societies the alleged necessity to optimize productive processes justifies the perpetration of socio-economic injustices and environmental degradation that Illich has defined as the “margins of disutility” of capitalism. (Illich, 1973, p. 33) It is exactly this normalization process, and the consequent subjection of humans to dynamics of capitalist production, that is a major cause of current ecological issues:

The exhaustion and pollution of the earth's resources is, above all, the result of a corruption in man's self-image, of a regression in his consciousness. Some would like to speak about a mutation of collective consciousness which leads to a conception of man as an organism dependent not on nature and individuals, but rather on institutions. (Illich, 1971, p. 48)

This process would not be possible if ecology did not consistently stoke up biological science, a social control tool par excellence, as it represents “a label under which a broad, politically organized general public analyzes and influences technical decisions.” (Illich, 1992, p. 48) In other words, ecology is one of the concepts functional to the separation of society from the natural world, because it preaches an holistic vision aimed at conciliating these two universes that normally are arbitrarily considered as divided. (Illich, 2015, pp. 120-121)

It is not a coincidence, indeed, that the word “ecology” was developed during the 1970s as an answer to the urgency for individuating limits on the exploitation of natural resources in order to deal with the incessant attacks of capitalism on society

and on the natural environment. (Illich, 1992, p. 21) If the concept of ecology is directly related to market economy, practices for the management of commons through vernacular laws constitute the basis for a lifestyle truly in harmony with nature. (Illich, 1992, p. 121) A society based on subsistence through the utilization of commons would be directly proportional to a low-energy consumption society and would guarantee more equality and a better socio-environmental balance. (Illich 1992, pp. 73-74) Additionally, according to Illich, it is necessary to create a convivial society based on production schemes counterpoised to those of industrial societies, where the separation of workers from the means of production would be replaced by a set of relations between individuals, based on principles such as creativity, social justice, subsistence and independent work. Such a society would be in much more harmony with the environment and able to promote social change and different forms of education through participative democracy. (Illich, 1973, pp. 11-13)

However, Illich's idea of revolutionizing human societies and the natural world through convivial values and practices is not merely based on activities of subsistence drawn from the past, but it suggests a mingling with modern technologies that could be put at the service of a more socially equal and sustainable society. Illich has observed, "These new vanguards conceive technical progress as one possible instrument to support a new type of value, neither traditional nor industrial, but both subsistence-oriented and rationally chosen. [...] Modern tools make it possible to subsist on activities which permit a variety of evolving life-styles, and relieve much of the drudgery of old-time subsistence." (Illich, 1981, p. 25)

The main condition necessary for achieving this change is based on the distinction between the ecosystem as a set of commons "within which people's subsistence activities are embedded," and as a set of resources to exploit for the

accumulation of wealth. (Illich, 1992, p. 48) Starting from this premise it would be possible to imagine a society that could promote more equitable forms of energy utilization and a more equal distribution of the energetics available. (Illich, 1973, p. 28) Clearly, this process would mean the return to more balanced forms of energy distribution pertaining to non-industrialized society. However, it is possible, according to Illich, to include within this paradigm more advanced technologies that could contribute to relieving mankind from strenuous work, creating decentralized production models that would adopt tools, rules and resources within everyone's means and in perfect socio-environmental balance:

While people have begun to accept ecological limits on maximum per capita energy use as a condition for physical survival, they do not yet think about the use of minimum feasible power as the foundation of various social orders that would be both modern and desirable. Yet only a ceiling on energy use can lead to social relations that are characterized by high levels of equity. [...] What is generally overlooked is that equity and energy can grow concurrently only to a point. Below a threshold of per capita wattage, motors improve the conditions for social progress. Above this threshold, energy grows at the expense of equity. Further energy affluence then means decreased distribution of control over that energy. [...] The choice of a minimum-energy economy compels the poor to abandon fantastical expectations and the rich to recognize their vested interest as a ghastly liability. (Illich, 2015, pp. 75-77)

The awareness that environmental crises within modern societies can be initiated with the privatization of the commons is one of the most important breakthroughs of Illich's radical thought. Tragically, modern human societies do not take into account this fundamental issue, mainly due to a lack of awareness over the relationship between environmental degradation and the spoliation of commons that, according to Illich, has contributed to the failure of environmental and social justice movements over the years:

For almost a thousand years many political parties have challenged the accumulation of environmental resources in private hands. However, the issue was argued in terms of the private utilization of these resources, not the

extinction of commons. Thus anti-capitalist politics so far have bolstered the legitimacy of transforming commons into resources. (Illich, 1992, p. 51)

It is only over the last years that part of the civil society, led by what Illich has defined as a new class of “popular intellectuals has started to understand the important connection between environmental issues that are increasingly threatening our globalized world and the dissolution of subsistence activities based on commons. (Illich, 1973, p. 48) There is nowadays a global movement that goes beyond nations, political ideologies and social classes that is highlighting the significant inconsistencies of technocratic mythologies. At the same time, this movement proposes the legitimate suspicion that “something is structurally wrong with the vision of the *homo faber*,” a suspicion that according to Illich, “belongs to people of all classes, incomes, faiths and civilizations. (Illich, 1973, p. 48). What unites this heterogeneous group of citizens is not classic political ideology, but literally, “the sense of being trapped,” or the lack of faith in the behavior of modern institutions derived by “the awareness that most new policies adopted by broad consensus consistently lead to results which are glaringly opposed to their stated aims.” (Illich, 1971, p. 48) This awareness is translating today into a radical opposition to the reality of the enclosures and to the economic schemes connected to it, while the ideology of the commons is beginning to gain new consideration in the collective consciousness and within modern political agendas. As observed by Illich:

Enclosure once accepted, redefines community. Enclosure undermines the local autonomy of community. Enclosure of the commons is thus as much in the interest of professionals and of state bureaucrats as it is in the interest of capitalists. Enclosure allows the bureaucrat to define local community as impotent to provide for its own survival. People become economic individuals who depend for their survival on commodities that are produced for them. (Illich, 1992, pp. 51-52).

It is in this same critique of the privatization of natural resources that lies the elements of real revolutionary change at the core of Illich's radical thought, because as pointed out by the same author, "fundamentally, most citizens' movements represent a rebellion against this environmentally-induced redefinition of people as consumers." (Illich, 1992, p. 52) To this Illich adds the obvious need to fight against "the consumer ethos," the "institutionalization of substantive values," and therefore to endeavor to "find a new balance in the global milieu depending on the deinstitutionalization of values." (Illich, 1971, p. 48)

Therefore, if the "time has come to enclose the enclosers," creating an equal and more sustainable society through practices of communing, it is also important to take into account Ivan Illich's radical thought. (Esteva, 2015, p. 87) Illich is able to lucidly assess the main contradictions within the capitalist system and to demonstrate how commons could constitute a system of universal practices for human societies, as they are based on principles shared by all mankind, regardless of cultural and geographical barriers. To follow Ivan Illich's radical thought, would imply for modern social movements to redefine their own agenda, thus promoting convivial instances that, in opposition to values such as wealth and profit-seeking, would generate a social system based on subsistence, thus leading the world to a post-capitalist transition. In other words, Illich reminds us that "we must replace communism, which has become a dirty word for many people, with communism." (Esteva, 2015, p. 90)

However, it is not through simple ideologies that it would be possible to reverse the actual socioeconomic mainstream trend and to face present and future environmental threats. As observed by Illich, revolutionary change will never happen through the promotion of a new ideology, but due to the shared interest that a vast

majority of the members of civil society will have in implementing those changes. Naturally, shared interests present themselves as a reflection of ideas and practices based on conviviality, as “only an active majority in which all individuals and groups insist for their own reasons on their own rights, and whose members share the same convivial procedure, can revive the rights of men against corporations.” (Illich, 1973, p. 107). Illich observes:

The alternative to managerial fascism is a political process by which people decide how much of any scarce resource is the most any member of society can claim: a process in which they agree to keep limits relatively stationary over a long time, and by which they set a premium on the constant search for new ways to have an even larger percentage of the population join in doing ever more with ever less. Such a political choice of a frugal society remains a pious dream unless it can be shown that it is not only necessary, but also possible: (1) to define concrete procedures by which more people are enlightened about the nature of our present crisis and will come to understand that limits are necessary and a convivial life style desirable; (2) to bring the largest number of people into now suppressed organization which claim their right to a frugal life style and keep them satisfied and therefore committed to convivial life; and (3) to discover or revalue the political or legal tools that are accepted within a society and learn how to use them to establish and protect convivial life where it emerges. Such procedures may sound idealistic at the present moment. (Illich, 1973, p. 109)

Thus, the convivial society foreseen by Illich goes way beyond the actual destructive ecological trend, promoting egalitarian socioeconomic relations and a more sustainable world through convivial practices. The implementation of convivial practices could thus generate a better socio-environmental balance fostering social equity and allow for the critical assessment of the issues related to the current environmental crisis.

The only solution to the environmental crisis is the shared insight of people that they would be happier if they could work together and care for each other. Such an inversion of the current world view requires intellectual courage for it exposes us to the unenlightened yet painful criticism of being not only anti-people and against economic progress, but equally against liberal education and scientific and technological advance. We must face the fact that the imbalance between man and the environment is just one of several mutually

reinforcing stresses, each distorting the balance of life in a different dimension. (Idem, p. 53)

Therefore, it is through shared practices and values based on subsistence and conviviality that it would be possible to create a global movement for the defense of commons that could attempt to dismantle the current abuses of global capitalism led by authoritarian states and private economic organizations. Evidence of the possible success of such a movement lies in the fact that, as reminded by Illich, “commons can exist without police, but resources cannot.” (Illich, 1992, p. 54) Hence, the importance of creating a set of convivial institutions based on spontaneous use instead of profit-seeking. Examples include: telephone link-ups, subway lines, mail routes, public markets and exchanges, which provide services that are utilized “without having to be institutionally convinced that it is to their advantage to do so.” (Illich, 1992, p. 25)

This process is functional to the creation of what Illich defines as a “durable-good economy,” or a social system supported by human interactions and durable goods, in open opposition with modern consumption economy based on planned and perceived obsolescence. A similar change would favor the creation of a society based not anymore upon institutional forms of action and planning, but upon action, direct participation and collaboration, allowing human beings that would inhabit them to be spontaneous, independent and altruist, and on top of that to develop ideologies and technologies that would support a lifestyle in complete harmony with the natural world. (Illich, 1971, p. 29)

In this light, commons are not a set of practices and norms that can coexist with conventional institutional and economic forms such as states and markets, but are a tool for the accomplishment of a convivial society that goes much beyond current economic trends. As far as issues related to the ecological crisis and to energy

usage are concerned, it is not radical ecological idealism that will solve the current issues, but the need to revolutionize human minds to a deeper level. In order to change the world by achieving a low-energy, no-impact society, humanity will have to share the assumption that the world has reached ecological limits and that economic activities in the future will have to take this into account to a deep level. As a consequence, not only will it be necessary for mankind to negotiate with the capabilities of our planet to shelter and give sustenance to all forms of life, but also to shape new values that do not echo old-fashioned and stereotypical political principles. Too, we will need to meditate on our place in this world as an animal species, thus assessing the true essence of humanity. Finally, the convivial system theorized by Ivan Illich will also help us in managing to assess the real role of humans and ultimately of all living beings as a whole, fostering our understanding of the chaotic but beautifully lively realm that we inhabit.

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Sarah van Gelder, *The Revolution Where You Live: Stories From A 12,000 Mile Journey Through A New America, Oakland, CA. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017. 212 pp., ISBN: 978-1-62656-765-8*

Reviewed by Jennifer Thoman

Confronted with the unrelenting onslaught of corporate greed, environmental degradation, human rights abuses, violent political and media rhetoric, and apathy, is it any wonder that activists in the United States face unprecedented levels of burnout?¹ But as the raging fire of movements like Occupy Wall Street morph and change into slow-burning embers, *Yes! Magazine* co-founder and editor-at-large Sarah van Gelder has chosen to run toward the heat, not away from it. In these tumultuous times, van Gelder seeks something more than the broad strokes change promised by national movements; instead, she endeavors to find hope and meaning in the small, place-based activism happening across the country. As an activist, I approached this project with joy: yes! Someone else is taking up the mantle of “Fight the power!”

The story of *The Revolution Where You Live* is deceptively simple. *Yes! Magazine* is full of stories of people doing the hard work of revolution-building, all over the world. Van Gelder has been, for the better part of 20 years, a passionately reflective and capable storyteller, bringing people together in service of a collective mission for good. The very nature of small-scale, anti-establishment organizing is that the media tends not to cover it when it happens. *Yes!* provides a forum where people can come together as solutionaries and work to change the world for the better. That said, it can be hard to continue fighting

¹Chen, C. W., & Gorski, P. C. (2015). Burnout in Social Justice and Human Rights Activists: Symptoms, Causes and

in the face of opposition from the governments and corporations that hold power, not to mention the friends, family, and neighbors who have not yet been awakened to the lie that is the extraction economy. Van Gelder believed, when she and others started the magazine, that the better angels of our nature would triumph in the end. After 20 years, some things have changed, but “the big trends are deeply disturbing.”² Seeking advice from a friend on how to soothe her soul, she found the answer setting out on a journey to find the people and places that were fighting back, to find out once and for all if community organizing could really save our lives.

Tied to relationship building, van Gelder’s road trip across the United States is chronicled by region and by theme. There is inspiration for everyone here—stories of humans in all kinds of life situations working for civil rights, environmental justice, food security, and other issues that impact large swaths of people all over the nation. In the Northwest, she meets ranchers and native people fighting to stop destructive coal mining, fracking, and mountaintop removal. At Turtle Creek, she meets with a tribe that successfully saved their water by passing, through Tribal Council, a ban on fracking, even as surrounding tribes succumbed to the temptation brought on by big money and big promises from the industry. In the Midwest, from cities to small towns, van Gelder meets people working for labor rights and better jobs. In Detroit, fueled by the radical power of the late Grace Lee Boggs, activists are energized in fighting evictions, water shut-offs, and a national narrative that paints a picture of an apocalyptic wasteland. The Detroit residents van Gelder meets with are trying to save their town, not only from government corruption and poverty, but also from gentrification and white saviors. The stories from

² Van Gelder, S. (2017). *The Revolution Where You Live*. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler.13.

Michigan paint a picture of a community that, like many others in the book, loves its place and wants desperately for it to be restored.

From the Midwest, she travels to the Southeast and East Coast. In Appalachia, she again learns of a community ravaged by the coal industry. The stories of coal in this book run counter to the narrative so popular in the media, that rural communities need coal to survive, and to fight coal is to fight “good American jobs.” Appalachia’s flattened mountaintops and abandoned mines are proof positive that coal is not a force for good. And while government officials attempt to bring money to rural areas by building prisons on those newly flattened mountains, some residents, energized by youth and pride, fight back. In Kentucky, an influx of young people are working to change the story of what it means to be from the mountains. A vibrant cultural landscape that includes music, art, and nightlife seeks to change the hearts and minds of traditional residents, with success as observed by van Gelder. Young people with diverse life experiences are finding ways to challenge the overt and aggressive racism that is rampant in the area. A local radio station, inspired by a phone call request, plays messages to the large local population of incarcerated people every Monday night. The love flowing through the airwaves shows locals, young and old, that there are invisible residents in Kentucky whose lives matter.

From Appalachia, van Gelder travels up through the eastern coast, meeting people in small towns and big cities who have been impacted by racism and are working to change the way their communities deal with divided identities. To bring the trip to a close, she drives through the Southwest and Texas, meeting immigrants and descendants of immigrants who are working to preserve their culture while also bringing understanding and tolerance to their new homes. When in Dallas, she learns of a Syrian

refugee family due to arrive, and the various ways religious communities are responding. And, then, she finds hope in a gay church, one that preaches radical inclusivity of all people rather than the violent exclusion and dangerous hatred found in many Evangelical churches in this country.

To be sure, these ideas are not new. Neither are they unique to this book and this author. Philosophers and activists alike have been discussing the power of people to change the world for centuries. Native people, like those van Gelder visited in the Northwest, have understood what it means to take things like love and clean water seriously, rather than treating them as idealistic dreams, since before there was a United States. What becomes evident in throughout van Gelder's stories, however, is just how strange a place is this country, united as it is in contradictions. As a nation, we distrust the government and fight tax increases in the name of righteous individualism, but refuse to accept responsibility for the breakdown of simple human kindness. Caring for one's neighbor is a radical act, often compared to the evils of socialism in particular conservative circles.

Yet, some of the most daring stories in van Gelder's journey are those of humans caring for other humans. Wendell Berry, writing for *Yes!* in 2014, says the following about small change and human good:

...Small solutions do not wait upon the future. Insofar as they are possible now, exist now, are actual and exemplary now, they give hope. Hope, I concede, is for the future. Our nature seems to require us to hope that our life and the world's life will continue into the future. Even so, the future offers no validation of this hope. That validation is to be found only in the knowledge, the history, the good work, and the good examples that are now at hand.³

³Berry, Wendell. "Wendell Berry on Climate Change: To Save the Future, Live in the Present." *Yes! Magazine* Mar. 2015. Web. 1 Nov. 2016.

Berry goes on to discuss the difference between living to save the world (from ending, someday in the future) and living “savingly” in it. To live with intention, taking only what you need from the earth, and to practice restoration in every aspect of your life is to live as if the world will continue indefinitely. The earth is not scarce; the earth is abundant, and will provide for its inhabitants as long as we recognize our place in the vast, interconnected web of relationships that have been at work for millennia. Humans are capable of so much more than taking the earth’s resources until there are none left, and harming each other until reparations are impossible. This is the ethos from which van Gelder builds her journey, and she endeavors to prove its worth in every story she retells.

In Harrisonburg, Virginia, a small but mighty group of activists are fighting for restorative justice practices to be incorporated into the criminal justice system. Like many stories of the system, this one includes statistics on the United States’ mass incarceration problem, along with an interview with a police officer. Distinct from other stories, this one centers on honesty and reconciliation. Police Lieutenant Kurt Boshart, a white officer in a predominantly African-American town, openly acknowledges his racial bias in an interview with van Gelder. His frankness on the issue is stunning. This is one of those aforementioned daring moments of a human caring for other humans. Boshart, a vocal supporter of restorative justice, actively encourages rookies on his force to talk about their biases. In such frankness, the good of the people, and the good work they can do, shines through. And, somehow, against my best instincts, I was moved by this project to work with police rather than abolishing them entirely.

After reading the stories that pepper van Gelder’s journey across the United States, I am left with the feeling deep in my bones that people, indeed, have power.

Communities come together and fight for recognition and acceptance, for the right to live on land that is theirs, for human dignity, for the basics of life such as food and shelter.

Arriving to the epilogue, however, there came a moment that forced me to question my own conclusion. How, I wondered, are we to reconcile a desire to detach from the institutions that have caused so much harm with our sustained drive to live in the world? After a call for increased small organizing, van Gelder describes the myriad ways corporations and complexes will fight to keep people down. “They will do this not because evil people are in charge, but because our system offers huge rewards for continuing the extraction, and big penalties for stepping out of that system.”⁴ Having been inspired by the stories of people and places, I was then brought back down to earth by the brief concession that laws must be changed, that “the economy will need to come back to being a servant of the people, not our master.”⁵ Was there ever a time in history when the economy was a servant of the people?, I wondered. What is it that we must go “back” to?

And, now, my activist self remembers that the worker class and ruling class have perennially clashed as their needs are at odds. Time banks, community gardens, truth commissions, and restorative justice all work *against* the tenets of capitalism and the extraction economy. They cannot be infinitely scaled up, and there is no benefit to increasing their efficiency (or introducing money, really). They are not suggestions of how to fix the system, but rather, ways to work outside of it. So why not take the extra step and suggest that perhaps the best way to fix the system is to break it?

⁴ Van Gelder, S. (2017). *The Revolution Where You Live*. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler. 188.

⁵ *Ibid*, 188.

Recently, while attending a retreat for a group of millennials impacted by significant loss, I found myself engrossed in a conversation about organizing and problem-solving, as I often do. The man I was talking to had co-founded an organization that enabled people to self-direct their own graduate education, and we'd started to chat about a shared passion for radical learning. As the topics we explored expanded outward, into the state of our world, the violence ever-present against marginalized people, and our mutual desire to change things, we began to feel the weight of the challenge pressing down on our shoulders. In the span of those hours, fueled by good food and better wine, we had gone from driven, young, creative-thinkers to devastated young activists, facing head-on the awe-inspiring mountain of obstacle and opposition that was our future. I then remembered, suddenly, that I had the review copy of van Gelder's book in my bag. I grabbed it, sensing it might provide counter evidence against our provisional conclusion. We paused, briefly, to think of answers to the question of what should happen next? Then, I handed my new acquaintance the book, and as he thumbed through the pages, he asked, "Do you think she's got a point?" In that moment, I struggled. Yes, grassroots organizing is the best way to connect small communities and organize towns against the forces of the extraction economy. People are capable of extraordinary things when they believe that their voices are loud and have worth. People who understand that in order for one of us to shine, we must all shine, are the ones who are most successful in radical organizing movements. Bringing the most marginalized voices to the front is a surefire way to get the needs of most people met. But then, he hit me with the same challenge that I found in the end of *The Revolution Where You Live*. I'd mentioned joining credit unions as a way to fight the big banks. "Even then," he said, "the card still has a Visa logo. We

can't disengage completely." I was momentarily disheartened. Too, I has reached the end of the book.

If van Gelder's message is that people have power, that we have the strength to do amazing things, and that love is an incredible force, couldn't one takeaway be that we *can* disengage completely? Perhaps this is not the message afterall. In choosing to acknowledge our place within these vast systems of corporate and government greed, and in accepting that we can't change those systems, maybe our real power is in choosing to transcend rather than escape. In seeking the power of the people to change, in rooting ourselves down into our communities, in finding ways to build meaningful relationships with the earth and each other and ourselves, we can build lives that have meaning above and beyond sweeping national change. Tiny movements of love and light in communities aren't *changing* the system—they are more important than the system. Eventually, that will be enough. This is the message of hope from van Gelder's journey. It is a small token, perhaps; a gift to lift the "you" in the book's title out of moments of despair. More than that, it is a call to action with a purpose. There is work to be done, and someone must do it. Why not the reader?

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Of Soil and Soul

Keefe Keeley

This blanket of death and life and minerals,
unseen things and under my fingernails,
a teeming membrane between stone and sun,
resurrects and reincarnates; here is redemption:
what we were and are and will be soon,
at home between the tomb and womb.

Illichian Thought in Action

Dana L. Stuchul, Madhu Suri Prakash

We hope you are well and flourishing. We wish to share with you just one example of Illich's thought-in-action.

For more than two decades, *Universidad de la Tierra en Oaxaca* has been at the center of alternative ways of learning. *Unitierra* is today more active than ever. The current, weekly seminar (offered continuously for 15 yrs), "Paths To Autonomy Under the Storm," illustrates *Unitierra's* current focus. The one-hour documentary "Re-learning Hope: The Story of *Unitierra*," produced by Kelly Teamey and Udi Mandel, further documents Illichian hope manifested.

Additional examples of *Unitierra's* beautiful and enduring initiatives include:

- With 1,500 courageous women, in marginal urban neighborhoods, *Unitierra* has facilitated learning about cultivating food for the family in the backyard. Together, *Unitierra* is working to create the structures for supporting the people in achieving self-sufficiency in water.
- Seeking new ways of healing, *Unitierra* co-created a cooperative of young men and women who are producing alternative healing remedies. With the *temazcal* of *Unitierra Huitzo*, new kinds of healers are employing wellness practices, while mentoring community healers.

- To address the horrors experienced by their children following police aggression
http://www.democracynow.org/2016/6/22/struggling_for_our_lives_gustavo_esteva), the people of San Pablo Huitzo sought *Unitierra* support for organizing community gatherings—replete with games, films, art activities and more—to support children and their families in healing their collective trauma.
- Recognizing the long-term threat of GMO seeds and other corporate agribusiness encroachments, *Unitierra* began the campaign “No Corn, No Country,” (*Sin maíz, no hay país*) that included: a museum exhibition, numerous print publications, multi-media productions and many other activities. This initiative transformed into a national movement, led by *campesinos* and activists, who continue to organize ways to protect native seeds. In Oaxaca, *Unitierra* supports “The Oaxaca Space to Defend Our Corn,” a group mobilizing to protect and to promote maize—from the place of its origin.
- “Reflection in Action” gatherings, rooted in the numerous social movements of Oaxaca, continue to generate new initiatives and new knowledge.

These are just a few of the stories of *Unitierra*’s work within communities. The number of people learning increases daily. More and more new people join to find together ways to resist and to construct a different society. *Unitierra Oaxaca* supports Indigenous communities throughout southern Mexico claiming their dignity, as learners

return to serve their communities.

But the horror of the current violence in Mexico—a facet of the violence erupting all over the world—has created great hardship in the efforts to maintain *Universidad de la Tierra*. **Your support, now, is imperative for this work to continue.**

- To create alternative ways of living, learning, healing and more—in community.
- To construct more *cisternas*. To establish more backyard gardens. To host more skill- and knowledge-sharing workshops.

IF you are moved to act in support of Indigenous peoples who are co-creating the better world we all know is possible—even in the midst of horror—please contact the Center for Convivial Research and Autonomy of California, affiliated with a sister organization, Unitierra Califas. (ccra@mitotedigital.org)

In making this call to support *Unitierra* in diverse ways, we also invite our readers to bring to our attention other initiatives for creating Illichian solidarities. Too, we stand with indigenous groups of both the South and the North—all imploring us to take the path prophesized by the Anishninaabe—to heal our broken relationship with earth, with our places, together.

Very gratefully,

Dana L. Stuchul, Madhu Suri Prakash