DAVID CAYLEY RESPONDS…

by David Cayley

First of all my thanks to my seven reviewers for their careful readings, and often extravagant praise. Words like "masterful," "invaluable," "astonishing," and – my favourite – "limpid" sound sweetly in a writer's ear and reward the many years of work that went into this book.

Some of these essays use the book as a starting point for further reflection – and so require little comment from me – while others engage critically with ideas in the book – and so require a more extensive answer – but I will try, in what follows, to say what I have gleaned from each one.

Robert Kugelmann takes as his starting point Illich's remark that reading Aquinas with Jacques Maritain in Rome in the late 1940's laid the foundation of his "entire perceptual mode." With sure-footed awareness that Illich was talking about a way of thinking, and not *Thomist* ideology, Kugelmann then revisits some of Maritain's writings in order to understand what Illich meant. I found this reading very rich particularly with regard to the crucial terms *subsistence* and *person* and to the link between them. Illich defended subsistence and, at one point, even defined modernity as a 500-year "war on subsistence," but he was often misunderstood by people who took subsistence to mean a bare living scraped from scarce resources. Francine Duplessix Gray even went so far as to cast him as a romantic with "the aristocrat's sentimental attraction…for cultures of poverty untainted by bourgeois aspiration." Kugelmann's reading makes clear that, for Illich, the word's primary reference is to independence and wholeness and that, when he speaks of subsistence as an economic

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style, it is to these attributes that he is referring. The case is the same with *person*. In Illich's seminal and still, as we shall see, scandalous lecture on *life* as an "institutional fetish" the key contrast is between the amorphous and unbounded condition of "a life" and the definite reality of a person, the category in which Western humanism had once been "anchored" according to Illich. But the word, again, was not well understood. Kugelmann, quoting Maritain, makes clear that "a person is a spiritual totality characterized by independence" – the link to subsistence – and that this wholeness is rooted at once in our relatedness to one another and in the image of God in which we were created. "This understanding of what it means to be a person" Kugelmann says, "underlies all of Illich's analysis of the modern age." I think this is exactly right.

An interesting sidelight on Kugelmann's paper is his introduction towards the end of an essay by Emmanuel Levinas in which the French philosopher reflects on Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's having encircled the earth in his spacecraft in 1961 and thus become the first person ever to see the earth from outside its atmosphere. Levinas takes the occasion to interrogate his teacher and nemesis Martin Heidegger and what he calls Heidegger's "superstitions surrounding Place." Yes, Levinas says, Gagarin's view might be just be the consummate "enframing" of nature by technology, but mightn't it also be a liberation from parochialism and our suffocating enclosure by Place? Kugelmann introduces the point as a *sed contra* – the "but on the other hand" which is a feature of Aquinas' formal dialectic. Might this objection also be applied to Illich, Kugelmann wonders. He then goes on to answer the objection, but what interested me was that Illich made a very similar point himself in a lecture he gave to a teach-in in Toronto in 1970, of which I was one of the organizers. This was back in the time when images of the whole earth photographed from space were just beginning to appear

and Whole Earth Catalogue founder Stewart Brand could believe that the sight of "the earth complete, tiny [and] adrift" would irrevocably alter popular consciousness. In his lecture Illich claimed that this image could be read in two ways: as a call to repentance or as an invitation to management. We know which road was taken, but it's interesting that Illich, like Levinas, also saw the positive aspect of the view from space.

Joey Mokos's "Go and Do Likewise" rereads the parable of the Samaritan from the perspective of the wounded one to whom the Samaritan ministers. Illich took this story as being about freedom to love beyond all restrictive categories, and objected to the standard account of it as a story illustrating a rule of conduct. Mokos supplements this interpretation by suggesting that we take the man who receives help from a completely unexpected quarter as the "protagonist" of the parable. The story can then be seen as emphasizing vulnerability, dependence, and helplessness even to discern where help might come from, as well as being about the Samaritan's power to act on the stirring he feels in the face of the man's plight. Mokos roots this reading in what he calls Illich's "theological anthropology" – his fundamental assumptions about what human beings are. These are, to paraphrase Mokos: that, being made in the image of God, we have the capacity to "co-create" the world; that, being communal creatures, we can only do this in relationship; and, finally, that we are free and can only fulfill this freedom spontaneously and responsively, rather than by prescription. I think Mokos is right that these *are* Illich's assumptions, and I think he is also right to direct attention to the helpless one in the story as a corrective against what he calls "the compulsion to act." Exclusive focus on the Samaritan, even if his freedom is acknowledged, still evokes the temptation to "save" which has been so strong in Christianity. Attention to the man-in-the-ditch emphasizes humility – and, crucially, surprise.

Neto Leão's "Not a Clergyman, Just a Man" revisits Illich's "The Vanishing Clergyman" and explores the ways in which Illich's pleas for "a new Church" were informed by his travels and experiences in Latin America. We know little of these journeys, as Illich seems to have made deliberate efforts to cover his tracks. Indeed he once told me – not without a touch of pride, I remember thinking – that he had made sure his biography would remain "hidden." But I find Leão's speculations plausible. Illich did envision a new Church, disentangled from governance and social service and re-centred on celebration, and, from his first travels in Puerto Rico in the early 1950's, he was inspired by the style of celebration he encountered there. I think that Leão is also right that the spirit of complementarity is already evident in Illich' earliest efforts to reimagine mission and remodel the church. One sees it in his insistence on the indissoluble unity of innovation and tradition, as well as in his attempt to distinguish the Church as surprise – "the pearl in the net" – from the Church as an institution shaped by the same power relations as any other institution. The powerless Church can only live, Illich says, "at the edge of time, at the end...of time" – in the world but not of it. Neto Leão celebrates and preserves this spirit in his essay.

Brother John's "Apocalypse Now!" makes a persuasive case that Illich's entire body of work can be understood as constituting an *apocalypse*. This was a fairly common genre of religious writing at the time of Jesus, and is most famously represented in the Bible in the Revelation to St. John the Divine. In my chapter headed Apocalypse I pointed to contradictory statements by Illich – the first, from 1992, asserting that he had "always abstained from making apocalyptic statements;" the second, from five years later, which allowed – hesitantly, he said – that he felt himself to be living "in an apocalyptic world," and even that it "might be quite close to the end of

the world." I interpreted this altered stance not as a change of mind, but as a final overcoming of his reluctance to give a confusing and bound-to-be misunderstood name to his view, matured over many years, that modernity is a progressive revelation of what Illich called "the mystery of evil" or, in another of his formulas, "the Incarnation turned inside out." His reluctance had been based, I thought, on the colloquial use of the term apocalypse as referring not to revelation, its meaning in Greek, but to destruction, often gruesome and vengeful. I dealt with the difficulty presented by this word by saying that Illich was an apocalyptic thinker, insofar as he saw an inexorable movement of revelation at work in modern history, and a non-apocalyptic thinker, insofar as he rejected the idea that the world will end all at once in a spectacular and pyrotechnic display of divine vengeance. I also distinguished between the "mythological" apocalypse, with its burning lakes, scarlet women, and warrior Christ, and that timeless Last Judgment which William Blake says may pass at any moment "upon that individual [who] Rejects Error and Embraces Truth."

Brother John takes gentle exception with me on this point and "part[s] company to a certain extent." He recognizes the element in the New Testament that I called mythological but prefers to characterize it as *symbolic*, saying that "the dramatic, violent and often bizarre images in which [John's New Testament vision] is clothed do not express its essence." In this way, he is able to argue that the Book of Revelation, and "apocalyptic thought" more generally, is not concerned primarily with the end of the world but rather with the "process" that is set in motion by "God's entry into history." He also denies my claim that there is a certain ambivalence in the New Testament about whether the Kingdom is here now, present and available, or about to arrive by fire and the sword, with "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It seems to me that we agree entirely about Illich –

within Brother John's definitions I think Illich's work is well understood as an apocalypse – but I think we disagree a little on the New Testament. I cannot help detecting a spirit of revenge and *ressentiment* in the Revelation to John, even when I read it symbolically. I have felt this aversion in all my attempts to read this book, going back to my youth, but I think I have also been influenced in this regard by Carl Jung's *Answer to Job*. This late work of Jung's – to summarize it very briefly – addresses the question of how evil is to be explained in a world created ex nihilo by an all-good God. It begins with the first expression of the problem in the book of Job where a God seemingly out of touch with his own omniscience makes a highly discreditable bet with his miscreant son Satan to torture a man, Job, who has shown him nothing by fealty and praise. According to Jung, Job shows himself "a better man" – a problem that can only finally be addressed by God himself becoming a man and submitting to the human condition. Thus begins the "constellation," in Jung's word, of the Son of Man archetype – evident, for example, in Daniel's dream of "one like a son of man" presented before a senescent "ancient of days" (Daniel 7:13), or Ezekiel' visions of "the glory of the Lord" in the "likeness of a human form" (Ezekiel 1:26) and culminating in the appearance of the Christ. But, for Jung, the problem has only been displaced onto an all-good Christ. The suppressed darkness of God must emerge, and emerge it does, Jung thinks, in the revenge fantasy of Revelation, where Jesus returns at the head of an army with a sword in his teeth and Babylon is "thrown down with violence." (Rev. 18: 21). Symbolic, of course, but what does it symbolize?

The second point which I can only mention in passing here is the larger ambivalence of the New Testament. In *The Rivers North of the Future* (p. 48), Illich described the Incarnation to me as something that "is a surprise, remains a surprise and *could not exist as anything else*." But, in various

places in the gospels, Jesus instructs his disciples to "search the scriptures" where they will find that all the events of his life, death and resurrection have been foretold, foreordained and shown to be "necessary," as the resurrected Lord says to the disciples he meets on the road to Emmaus. What can only exist as a surprise, and depends on Mary's assent to even occur (since her *yes* means nothing if a *no* had not been possible) cannot at the same time be necessary. This can be called complementarity or contradiction but has to be accounted for either way.

At the end of a long, recorded conversation in 1988, Illich unveiled his, to me, astonishing idea that "the fate of Western culture" can be comprehended in the saying, *Corruptio optimi quae est pessima*. He then said that his contemplation of this "evil deeper than any evil I could have known with my unaided eyes and mind" had led him to "become increasingly tentative, but also more curious and totally engaged in searching for its origin, which is the voice of him who speaks." (I note the present tense and the implication that the one who spoke is still speaking.) Illich insisted repeatedly on his orthodoxy, and I think he is well understood as someone who tested the limits of his tradition without ever exceeding them. However, he does counsel a search for the living voice that is at the *origin* even as it exceeds it. Illich's apocalypse, as Brother John shows, is the revelation of what happens when the word of God is mistaken and misappropriated. We are all implicated and engulfed in this misunderstanding. How deep our consequent rethinking and rereading must go in order to discover John Milbank's "future we have missed" – the future north of the future – remains for me an open question.

Sajay Samuel's "An Unlit Candle" poses a major challenge, and one that I suspect his wide reading makes him better equipped to address than I am. However, he's addressed it to me, so I'll try. Complementarity, traditionally, was hi-

erarchical. How opposing terms and jurisdictions were to be understood and assigned was determined at another level of the hierarchy in which they were found. Samuel repeats Louis Dumont's example of "the two swords" imagined by Pope Gelasius I: the temporal power possessed by the Emperor, the spiritual authority invested in the Pope. Clashes between them had to be settled at a higher level of the hierarchy. In spiritual matters the Pope's authority included and subsumed the Emperor's power, while in the administration of earthly justice the Pope must bow to the Emperor. In a hierarchy, complementary pairs are not simply and flatly opposed – not "symmetrical," Samuel says – because each varies in significance, weight, and authority according to its relation to a higher and more inclusive level of the hierarchy in which they appear. This leads Samuel to ask whether the definition I give to complementarity in the book, and the philosophy of complementarity to which I try to assimilate Illich, is not "incomplete."

Good question. Let me begin with *Gender* – the only place where Illich explicitly addresses the subject of complementarity. Illich says, rather mysteriously, in one of the book's titled footnotes, that his idea of gender "is nourished by the scholastic concept of *relatio subsistens*." He does not say what this concept is, and I imagine that he had relatively few readers who recognized it as a way of characterizing the mysterious character of a triune God composed of three *persons*, each independent and yet related. But those few who did might then have wondered whether gender, for Illich, wasn't the bottom story of a hierarchy, and one that reaches ultimately into the very nature of God. Illich, however, doesn't say so. Indeed he says so remarkably little that the whole book fairly readily lends itself to the idea that Illich, if not actually an esoteric writer, was one who kept a lot of his cards very close to his chest. Why should this be? My provisional answer would be

that he wanted to address, or better, to *convene* a public, and, since he knew all too well the state of deep moral, philosophical and theological confusion in which his potential readers lived, he shaped and limited his rhetoric accordingly. Order and hierarchy are principles long ago slain on the battlefields of *equality* – that most irresistible face of the *corruptio optimi*. It's not that complementary pairs *shouldn't* be ranked and reconciled according to how they serve more comprehensive ends, it's that they *can't* be because no one can agree on what these ends are.

Complementarity to me is a fact – of ecology, where species oppose and limit each other, of language, where opposing terms define each other, of physiology, where all our activities depend on our opposing limbs. I pointed to the prevalence of this idea in Illich's work – whether it was tradition and innovation in church reform, the "multiple balances" constituting conviviality, the vernacular as a bulwark against commodification, or the interplay of Christ and anti-Christ in the unfolding of Christianity. I agree that what these things mean depends on their context. Tradition and innovation, for example, would be a sterile pair, if one didn't know at a given moment whose turn it was to curtsy and whose to bow. There must be a context in which they dance and in which they are reconciled. Whether there must be a *hierarchy* in which the "higher" assigns the "lower" its significance is, I think, a question. The very idea that one knows what is higher rankles a little – the God who was once "above" now has no definite place. Neighbours, even loved ones, fail to agree on their "values."

My prescription is conversation, and a deep pluralism which recognizes that different peoples now live in incommensurable moral orders and must practice peaceful and respectful diplomacy if they are not to go to war. In Canada, for example, the very legitimacy of the country is in question in various indigenous discourses. Hierarchy appears, under these circumstances, premature. What is higher is precisely what is in dis-

pute. Christianity has failed, but its unconscious inheritors have not yet heard the news. The conversation, if there is to be a conversation, is just beginning.

Illich suggests a search, tentative and curious, for the "origin." This is one path – Christians, the ones who know they are Christians and the many more who don't, must find the source, if they are ever to come to terms with themselves and the others whom they have wronged. But there are other paths, and other peoples, and I think it will be a long time before anyone again has assured knowledge of the proper relations between Pope and Emperor, vernacular and market or any other opposing pair.

Nicola Labanca's "Systems, unexpectedness, flatness and counterproductivity" is a marvel. Illich left behind him a deeply felt but still fairly sketchy critique of what he called "the age of systems." Initially attracted to cybernetics, he sensed by the early 80's that this philosophy would produce what he called disembodiment – a conception of oneself not as an enfleshed person but as a system. He went on to specify quite clearly the difference between the age of instrumentality, in which tools remained distinct from their users, and the age of systems, in which the user is indistinguishable from the system. He also recognized that this meant that his work of the 1970's had been founded on assumptions that no longer obtained - the main one being that he was addressing a public able to distinguish itself from its toolkit, however gigantic, of schools, hospitals, highways etc. and also able, in theory at least, to alter and limit these tools. Indeed, he had adopted the word *tools*, in contradistinction to *technology* – that more encompassing and fateful ensemble of which Heidegger, Ellul and others had written – as a way of underlining the possibility of isolating, analyzing and responsibly limiting these tools. Systems blurred all assumed boundaries and made the problem completely intractable. The health care "establish-

ment" which he had thought to address in Medical Nemesis as a "threat to health" had begun to appear to him by the mid-80's as no establishment at all but rather as a function of a system that obeyed its own laws and offered no external handle – moral or epistemological - by which it might be controlled or reformed.

Beyond this sense that the "outside" had disappeared, that the computer could in no way be classified as a *tool* in the received sense, and that all transcendence was being swallowed by a philosophy of pure immanence, Illich said relatively little about the character of systems. Labanca has taken up this task and helped me to understand what Illich intuited. I have barely begun to assimilate what he has written, but here are a few initial thoughts. Because they are little more than places to start, I'll put them in point form:

-Labanca shows the folly of the current popular habit of talking about science as if it were a single, compact, intelligible object, always the same. Science has a history, and one of the most precious intellectual achievement of our time has been the work done by numerous scholars in transforming science from an all-conquering idealization into a concrete historical practice. Complex systems science is not, as people say, your grandmother's science. It is something radically new.

-On the other hand, complex system science can be seen a destiny implicit in the natural philosophy of Galileo and Bacon all along. The mechanical philosophers of the Enlightenment took the point of view of God. They eliminated all divine caprice but assumed the stability and intelligibility that inherently belonged to a created order. But they were, at the same time, as Nietzsche said, the "gravediggers" of God. Without God, the *autopoesis* or self-making of the cybernetic philosophers was bound to follow sooner or later. What makes itself

must necessarily lack those stable boundary conditions that Labanca says are the hallmark of Newtonian science.

-Illich emphasized the disembodying character of systems theory – sometimes to the point that he declined to even discuss what might be true in such theory. For example, he rejected out of hand British scientist James Lovelock's Gaia Hypothesis, saying that there was nothing in it that he was willing to recognize as science and that it was "inimical to what earth is." (I have written at more length about my unsuccessful efforts at dialogue with Illich on this subject in an essay called "Gaia and the Path of the Earth" which can be found on my website.) But it seems clear to me, nonetheless, that there is something true in systems theory. Such theory, for example, amends the classical expression of the theory of evolution which held that species evolve in relation to a relatively fixed "environment." A systems perspective shows, in Labanca's words, that "species evolve in relation to their environment *while the environment evolves in relation to them*." And one can add, moreover, that the evolution of species, at least in part, constitutes the environment. As someone who for many years urged his colleagues at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to forsake the pose of objectivity and recognize the ways in which they were creating the reality which they pretended to be only observing, I do not at all want to deny the insights of systems theory on this point.

-We might conclude that systems theory is true, in a limited, sense but also disembodying. What then? Here Labanca's hint that we might need to "practice a complementary style of relationality to that impressed into systems" is germane. It would be easier and less threatening to acknowledge the partial truth of systems theory if one had a place to stand outside it.

-Labanca suggests that systems, by definition, dissolve boundaries and amplify perturbations thus creating a condition of growing instability. Reassurance and relief from the feeling of standing in mid-air is then sought in intensifying efforts at surveillance and control. One "replaces unknown boundary conditions with known processes that operate in both the machine and the animal." I think this explains a great deal of what we've seen during the panic of the last two plus years – the need for control, even to the easy embrace of the term *lockdown*, until then rarely heard outside of prisons, seemed obvious to most even before anything was known about the actual threat posed by the novel virus.

-Labanca's essay makes a crucial contribution, along with others of his writings, to the clarification of Illich's critique of life as an "institutional fetish." Illich spoke in 1989, in an address to a Lutheran convocation in Chicago, of "a cybernetic system which, in real time, is both model and reality, a process which observes and defines, regulates and sustains itself." I have contemplated that sentence with rueful admiration for thirty years and seen its truth born out in contemporaries who speak without art or irony of the state of their *systems*, making no distinction, and leaving no distance, between themselves and the model they incarnate. Labanca's remarks on *recursivity* and the ways in which "processes overcome substance" have helped me to delve further into that remarkable sentence.

-Labanca's descriptions of systems as marked by uncertain and indefinite boundaries and a "flat ontology" clarify points made in other essays in this collection. One is the notion of person, described by Bob Kugelmann as characterized, ideally, by wholeness, completeness, uniqueness and independence-in-relation. Labanca makes it clear why persons cannot

exist when systems define what we are. Another is hierarchy, which Sajay Samuel identifies as the crucial context in which complementarity must be located and by which it must be modulated. But hierarchies, Labanca writes, are "deconstructable" within systems – another reason why there's a lot of intellectual spade work to do before hierarchies of any kind will be able to settle disagreements or resolve contradictions.

-Finally, I think that Labanca has sketched the outlines, not just of a new science, but also of a new religion. "What's wrong with Gaia," Illich said to me, "is these guys [i.e. those who propound such theories] want to be scientific. What the difference is between that kind of science and religion is, I don't know." (These are the last words in *Ivan Illich in Conversation*.) I will not take up the point here – and there is much else of value in Labanca's essay that I have passed by as well – but it seems to me that the largest problem posed by systems theory is that it dissolves all standpoints and thereby makes it impossible to discover the roof, or limit, which was always the object and end of Illich's quest. I do not think this place to stand will now be found until we can recover its ground.

It remains to discuss Wolfgang Palaver's review, reprinted here, for the *Bulletin* of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion. Palaver has been a great friend to Illich studies, and his invitation to me to come to the University of Innsbruck, where he teaches theology, to lecture on *The Rivers North of the Future* was a major encouragement at a time when that book was new and still in search of its public. He shows his skill and discernment in interpreting Illich by the digest he gives of my book and in the way he relates Illich's work to that of his friend and teacher René Girard. He also makes a promising analogy, in light of his recent studies of Gandhi, between Illich's treatment of gender and Gandhi's treatment

of caste – a subject on which I hope to hear more from him one day. But, finally, he comes to what has become a sticking point between us: Illich's denunciation of *life* as a contemporary idol, and the "trap" into which he thinks I have "partly" fallen by turning Illich's "warnings into prescriptions." The previous issue of *Conspiratio* included a long essay in which I tried to respond to Palaver – and to Jean Pierre Dupuy who had made a related criticism – so I will be brief here.

René Girard argued the superiority of the Gospel text "let the dead bury their dead" – Jesus' statement to the young man who wants to follow him but asks leave to first bury his father – to Sophocles' play *Antigone* in which the eponymous protagonist sacrifices her own life rather than leave her fallen brother unburied as the king has ordered. The contrast between these texts founds a distinction, for Girard and Palaver, between a Biblical religion of life, in which death is an enemy that will finally be destroyed, and a classical or tragic view in which death is an inexorable power that must finally receive its dignity, its tribute and its ceremony. Palaver finds various hints both in Illich, and in my exposition of his thought, which indicate that both of us may be "closer to the tragic thinking than to the biblical spirit." He takes up, for example, Illich's wrestle with the question of how contemporary persons can discover, while under comprehensive medical management, a fitting way and time to die and concludes that Illich's view "comes close to euthanasia." He also wonders whether Illich's lifelong emphasis on dying as a personal and, in Illich's word, "transitive" act does not attempt to control what is properly one of life's "existential uncontrollabilities," a phrase he quotes from German sociologist Hartmut Rosa.

I am puzzled as to what the issue really is here. I don't think it's theological. Amateur as I am in that discipline, I suspect that were Palaver to read, as perhaps he has, Illich's early essays "Rehearsal for Death" and "The End of Human

Life," both recently republished in *The Powerless Church*, that he would have no theological objection to their arguments. The problem seems to be that any cultivation of an art of dying, any hint that dying is something that we can do, rather just submit to at the termination of treatment, or any suggestion that the war on death may have consequences that are injurious to life, brings the reproach that one is somehow on the side of death and on the verge of lapsing back into paganism and tragedy. Perhaps there's a confusion between the "life more abundant" that is promised in Christ and the "human resource" that Illich thinks is its parody and corruption. Perhaps Palaver takes a more sanguine view of medical hegemony than Illich does. In any case I think the issue is practical and political.

I'll quickly try to say what I mean then stop. The measures implemented against the pandemic in the last two plus years were justified as "life-saving." Very old people were locked up and deprived of all contact with their loved ones in order to save their *lives*. Often enough they were neglected as part of this salvation. People were deprived of livelihood in the interest of *life*. Foundational rights, like informed consent, were suspended in order to force a vaccine on people who didn't want it. This right, enumerated in the 1947 Nuremberg Code, was arguably the very basis on which post-war medicine rested its legitimacy. I won't go on. It seems plain enough to me that *life* here is not life eternal or life more abundant, or even just the quality of aliveness. It is an idol, monopolized by a priesthood, and operated by that priesthood in its own interests. People submit because they are afraid and have lost any sense of their own competence and power of judgment. In the name of this idol, people have been injured and abused, inequality and unaccountable power have increased, uncertain and contested science has been presented as unanimous and unquestionable, a demonstrable

censorship has been instituted, and all this, as I said, has been justified in the name of life.

I have watched with some amazement, as old friends have supported and applauded policies that I would have expected them to question and resist. The conclusion I have been forced to is that I'm witnessing the power of the *sacred* – and I mean the sacred in exactly the sense in which I learned to think of it from René Girard – as something that people make and then deny that they have made in order to worship it and claim its peace and protection. The new religious variety that's founded on this *sacred* is one of the degenerations of the gospel that Illich summarized under the tag *corruptio optimi pessima* and should not be mistaken for the original which it corrupts. I do not think that Illich is any less a friend to life in its proper sense than is Palaver. Rather I think he recognized that the denial of death leads to the fetishization of life in the wrong sense. By denial I mean making death an enemy and an obscenity. I don't think that the venerable philosophical tradition that claims that living well involves learning to die is, or should be, at odds with Christianity. I think that Illich was trying to secure the foundation for fullness of life, and I hope that one day Wolfgang Palaver will see that he is mistaken in connecting him in any way with "tragic thinking" or "the violent sacred."