

Editor's letter

Conspiratio is a periodical, and a periodical is different from a scholarly journal or a popular magazine. It collects the fruits of what is grown in a 'garden of low studies,' a phrase proposed by Giorgio Agamben. It is a vehicle for those who want to collaborate with each other in thinking after Illich. It is founded on the belief that arguments require the clarity and distance of the written word to be properly understood, even if it is the utterances of fleeting speech that can decisively change a heart. The name *Conspiratio* was previously used by the Mexican poet Javier Sicilia for a publication that is no longer in print. Though we live in the time of conspiracy theories, fake news, and state and corporate propaganda, both Javier and I were inspired to choose the name by a line in Illich's essay titled *The Cultivation of Conspiracy — '...the quest for truth cannot thrive outside the nourishment of mutual trust.'*

This is the second issue of *Conspiratio*. If, twenty years ago, someone had predicted a resurgence of popular and scholarly interest in Illich, he would have been met with restrained skepticism or open incredulity. Yet, that is precisely what has come to pass. In this issue, two peaks of that surging interest find expression. The first peak is represented by the Italian edition of Illich's *Opere Complete* curated by Fabio Milana and supervised by Giorgio Agamben. An English translation of Milana's introduction to the first volume titled *Ivan Illich. Celebrare la consapevolezza. Scritti 1951-1971* (Neri Pozza 2020) is the only essay in this issue because it deserves exclusive attention. It is scrupulously attentive to

Illich's writings between 1951 and 1971, dense with historical details of Illich's curriculum vitae in those years that are unfamiliar to even those who knew him and contains brilliant insights into the theological and sociological facets of Illich's missiological thought.

The second peak of the rising interest in Illich is represented by David Cayley's remarkable *Ivan Illich: an intellectual journey* published in 2021. There have been numerous reviews of his book, and seven authors have responded to it in this issue. In his appreciation of this 'masterful and comprehensive study', Brother John clarifies why he thinks of Illich as 'the author of an apocalypse.' In the second article, Neto Leao suggests that Illich missiological thinking was forged in the cauldron of his pilgrimage through Latin America during the late 50s and early 60s. Leao's claim can be useful compared to Milana's assessment of the matter. Robert Kugelmann insists that understanding Illich's writings requires appreciating his 'Gothic approach', which he says underwrites Illich's sense of a person and 'all of Illich's understanding of the modern age.' Nicola Labanca explores the status of the person in the age of systems. Whether the person can survive the technological or 'shine forth in all its nudity' —to pick up a phrase from Levinas cited by Kugelmann— remains an open question. Cayley proposes understanding Illich as a 'philosopher of complementarity.' Sajay Samuel asks if complementarity is a matter of the tension between opposites or the relation between opposites in the context of some third, enframing whole. Illich noted that the general understanding of the parable of the Samaritan was as a commandment of how to act towards those less fortunate. In contrast, Illich's reading emphasized the radical freedom exercised by the Samaritan. Joey Mokos reinterprets Luke 10:25-37 to suggest that it is not the Samaritan but the man in the ditch who offers the recommended model of behavior.

Finally, Wolfgang Palaver's review of the book was written for Girardians and also picks up on a theological issue. He claims that, unlike Girard, Illich's theology of death 'is closer to tragic thinking than to the biblical spirit.' David Cayley's reply to all these comments, suggestions, challenges, and appreciations rounds out the collection of [articles in this issue](#).

The [reviews section](#) features John Baldacchino's *Educing Ivan Illich: reform, contingency, and disestablishment*. The [section on translations](#) contains the Portuguese text of *The Institutional Construction of a New Fetish: a human life* by Ivan Illich. It is particularly timely given the articles by Mokos and Palaver. This translation is part of the forthcoming translation by Neto Leao and Nilo Coradini of Illich's *In the Mirror of the Past*. What is happening in Brazil represents a third emerging peak of the interest in Illich's thought and work.

I invite all authors and readers to discuss points of disagreement and clarification on the Forum. That space is intended to foster informal collaboration in thinking after Ivan Illich. I remind readers that the focus of the upcoming third volume of *Conspiratio* will be the question of the *techo comun* or the common roof. It will explore the concept of limits and appropriate scale in economic, social, personal, and political matters. All kinds of articles are welcome — annotated bibliographies of scale in the natural and social sciences, examples of living within community-imposed limits on technology, the meaning of limits and related concepts in Illich, and replies to specific suggestions in the note titled *The need for a common roof* published in the previous issue. Everyone is invited to not only submit articles, but also essays, book reviews, and translations. The deadline for all submissions for the upcoming issue is October 15, 2022.