R. Buckminster Fuller, Ivan Illich, and Claudio Naranjo: Teachers Who Shaped My Life

Three very dissimilar teachers shaped my intellectual and spiritual life. Buckminster Fuller, Ivan Illich, and Claudio Naranjo have little obvious in common. To my knowledge none of them ever met. My encounters with them were intense but by no means continuous or really extensive. They affected how I see the world, and disturbed the course of my life. I recognize my debt to them and regret that I did not learn more from them, or use what I learned to construct a more fruitful life. I use the occasion of writing this essay to review what I learned and to reflect on the ways that the encounters, while momentus for me, were ultimately unsatisfactory. Inevitably, the essay reflects more on me than on them and I do not apologize for this.

In what follows, I write based primarily on my experience. Although I did reread some of their books and articles, written by each of the three, I have not researched the men or their biographies. This is not intended as a work of scholarship and undoubtedly there are errors both of fact and of interpretation. I do not contend that I fully understand their work or their perspectives. What I offer is my testimony of what I perceived at the time of my encounters with them and my reflections since that time. Knowing of my interest in Fuller and Illich, Claudio Naranjo encourage me to write about my relations with him and with them. Although I have not seen anything written by him about either Fuller or Illich, he has an interest in their work and thought and was interested in seeing my perspective.

Aside from the coincidence of my involvement with each of them, and despite great differences in the themes of their work and the disciplines they invoked to accomplish it, I believe Fuller, Illich, and Naranjo do have some commonalities. All three have been charismatic leaders inspiring large numbers of followers who might not otherwise have met or been associated with each other. Unlike many gurus and leaders, they did not seek devotees. Nor did they build multi-level organizations. Their teaching and scholarship are highly individual. Yet their charisma attracted people at all levels of development and with a wide variety of capabilities.

Two words, one Spanish and one English, characterize what they had in common and what attracted me to their lives and their work: *entrega* and enthusiasm. The Spanish word *entrega* signifies the deep commitment that each of them gave to life and to following their destinies, the continually-regenerating energy they gave throughout their lives to pursuing their engagement with the world and their fidelity to their missions, the faith that each of them had in the significance of what they were doing. The English word *enthusiasm*, which of course derives from the Greek and indicates that "God is within" signifies the knowledge deeper than faith that beyond the visible utilitarian world of institutions, of power, and of convenience there is a world of meaning and truth, and that they belong to that world and were meant to serve it.

What I realize further is how deep was their courage to live and work in a world which they sensed as profoundly alien and even hostile without becomng bitter or resentful. In this I understand that they came early and uniquivocally to realize themselves as adults.

I believe I was instinctively drawn to these profound characters as representing a deep hunger within me. I circled around them, tantalized by the spiritual nourishment I felt they might offer.

In reviewing my encounters with the three of them I am coming to realize more and more how little I understood of what they were actually doing. I was attracted to their work and to them as

realized human beings. Yet I myself was very far from being developed sufficiently to meet them as an accomplished student much less as a colleague. They influenced me and I learned from them, but I was able to follow them only a short way along the path before I realized how limited were my capabilities. The writing of this essay-memoir is an exercise in humility. The fact that I was sufficiently attracted to each of them to alter aspects of my life, to travel great distances, and to spend significant amounts of time studying their work does not in itself mean that their work has anything in particular in common. However, it may reveal something about me. I am curious to find out what that may be.

Buckminster Fuller

At the time I met R. Buckminster Fuller in 1972, he was 76 years old and in perhaps the most productive period of his life. He was engaged in many architectural projects around the world. All of his books were in print. He taught widely and gave numerous public talks. The United States pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal was housed in a huge geodesic dome designed by Fuller. He travelled continually giving talks to large and enthusiastic audiences. These talks, dubbed "concerts", were extended, seemingly spontaneous but actually highly structured monologues ranging from history and the prospects for humanity, to cosmology, geometry, and metaphysics. The fame of his practical projects gave credibility to what he was saying about nature and the world. His geodesic domes were used by the U. S. State Department and the military, as well as by many large corporations. But the expansiveness of his thought and the engaging manner in which he spoke were what attracted people. His speeches were attended by people from all walks of life but were especially appealing to enthusiastic audiences of students and hippies. He seemed to the latter to be preaching an imminent end-of-days utopia of abundance and world peace, as well as a quasi-mystical understanding of world history and the role of humanity in the cosmos.

Fuller is well remembered in the United States. Recently, exhibits of his work travelled to major museums around the United States, and a postage stamp was issued commemorating him and his inventions. A monologist created a representation of him in his own words and has performed it widely. There is a Buckminster Fuller Institute devoted to his memory and books continue to be written about him. However, he is much less known in Spain and perhaps in Europe.

Fuller called his proposals for the engagement of scientists, engineers, architects, and others in the development of inventions and plans to provide abundant sustenance for humanity the World (Peace) Game, by analogy with the war games that the military play in planning scenarios for large and small war around the world. In the 1960s, Fuller proposed the World Game as a study curriculum for architecture schools. He hoped that it would be funded as a major research project in its own right. The proposal that he had submitted for the U.S. pavilion at Expo 67 would have demonstrated part of his World Game ideas to a wide audience (in the event, the dome to house the exhibit was accepted but the exhibits themselves were more prosaic).

Fuller was a very engaging man, highly energetic and disciplined, very much developed personally, very experienced in all walks of life. He dressed conservatively, usually in a 3-piece black suit, with his white hair cropped short and wearing characteristic thick corrective lenses to compensate for his far-sightedness. He had been a Navy officer, an industrial executive who had started many companies, had worked around the world and was well respected in the academic world. He knew many world leaders intimately including two prime ministers of India (Jawaharlal Nehru, and Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi), Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, and

the Shah of Iran. He was an intimate of Constantine Doxiadis. He had worked with the U.S. Department of State, and with the military. He had worked in publishing at Time, Inc and published numerous books and articles. And he was very open and direct. He could connect with young children, and with students of all ages.

Fuller's message was again and again that it would be possible - perhaps before the year 2000 - to organize the industry of the world so as to provide a decent living for all of humanity. He was urgent in his message at a time in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union when nuclear missiles could have destroyed civilization within 30 minutes. He was particularly convincing, though, explaining how the world had come to such a pass and why that state of the world was not inevitable. Rather merely than speaking of peace, or of reducing tensions, he provided a detailed explanation of the origins of the situation and a vision of how we could escape from it by providing adequate wealth and sustenance for all. It is hard now to recall how much his speeches and writings inspired hope and what seemed to be practicable ways of achieving these utopian visions.

His vision for "making the world work" was not based on sharing poverty or on encouraging people to renounce their material values and aspirations. Rather, he showed how in fact there was not at the time enough material wealth for all. He based his teachings on the findings of Malthus (that population would tend to grow faster than the availability of resources to support it), Darwin (that a competition for survival was inherent in the natural world), and Marx (that those who produce wealth have a right to enjoy its fruits). However, he tempered what might have seemed a revolutionary message of class war by pointing to the growth in material wealth made possible by industrialization. He estimated that while at the beginning of the 20th century there was wealth enough to sustain only one per cent of humanity, by the end of the century there could be enough for all.

Fuller said that the circumstance of having to work to justify living was a reflection of a state of affairs in which people were expected to fail. He offered a vision of a world free from the existential anxiety of having to earn a living, of having to earn one's right to exist. While he did not promise a world of happiness for everyone, he did propose that the fundamental basis of life in the world could be changed from competition for existence to a sufficiency for all, from a world organized around war as the ultimate destructive competition, to a world in which attention, intelligence, and resources were directed to providing an increasingly high standard of living for everyone.

Fuller sought to define a material living standard that could guide designers and planners in the work of providing for all humanity. This was not to be a minimal subsistence but a high standard of living. Part of the goal was to define a standard so that it would be possible to say with confidence, e.g. how much electrical energy would be needed in order to provide for all what they needed, rather than simply leaving it to market competition. Fuller believed that comprehensive anticipatory design was possible, and devoted much thought to means for the practice of what he called comprehensive anticipatory design science. This practice was based on his study of the re-use of the metals on which industrial economy is based, on the life-span of the tools and products of industry, and on long-term trends in the development of improved technologies.

Fuller's vision for the world was rooted in practicality yet it was also highly idealistic. He understood that material sustenance was not enough and cited Aldous Huxley's observation that

people need more. As he put it, people ultimately will not be satisfied with the Shakespearian vision of a world in which "all the world's a stage" in which people play their parts, but there is no significance beyond. He suggested that human intelligence might be needed to maintain the integrity of the universe, that life and especially intelligent life had an anti-entropic function in the regeneration of the cosmos. These ultimately mystical views he expressed not as a mystery passed down through the ages but as an hypothesis consonant with the findings of current science.

Fuller coupled the two ideas: human intelligence was integral with the cosmos; if one were doing what the universe needed, one would be sustained by it. One would have to work very hard, but it was work meaningful to the world rather than working at a job one did not like much.

The idea is seductive. It is a religious, mystical idea. It says, as Unitarian Minister Kay Jorgensen puts it, "the world provides what you need before you need it". This was not merely a personal principle but a guiding philosophy which may have derived from Fuller's roots in the 19th century transcendentalism and Unitarianism of his New England forebears (Fuller's great aunt was Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), an associate of Emerson and founding editor of *The Dial*, a periodical devoted to transcendentalist thought). Fuller may not have received his beliefs as an explicit system of thought, but it would appear that he did inherit the conflict between two ways of thinking which formed much of the worldview of the New England where he was raised: a dominant Calvinism and an undercurrent of Transcendentalism. The Calvinism would hold that people are born in sin and most are doomed to damnation, to failure. Only a small minority of elect, revealed as being so in part through their material prosperity, could succeed in life. Fuller's crisis and revelation at age 32 that he was an integral and valuable part of the universe could be seen as his conversion to the Transcendentalism which was also part of his patrimony.

Fuller was born in 1895 in Massachusetts and spent much of his childhood and youth on the coast of Maine. As Fuller tells it in *Ideas and Integrities*, as a child he got good practical experience with boats and mechanical devices. He was the fifth generation of his family to go to Harvard University but was discharged midway through his first year for indiscipline. He was sent to work in a factory in Canada where he got more experience with machines and went back to Harvard only to be discharged again. This time he went to work in the meat packing business in New York. When the U.S. entered World War I he enlisted in the Navy. There he was so successful that he was sent for training as an officer. He learned about how the world was organized for mastery by the British Empire and got experience on ships, with naval aviation, and with wireless telegraphy. He was much impressed with how well nations organized to fight wars in contrast to how poorly they seemed to be organized to support the population in peace. In wartime, the question was how to get the job done, rather than who would pay for it. New technologies were readily employ to aid in killing, but there were long lags in using the technologies to improve housing and food supplies. These perceptions later were the basis for his ideas for World (Peace) Games as opposed to the World (War) Games employed by the military general staff.

Before entering the U.S. Navy in 1917 he had worked in a variety of major industries and was familiar with how they were organized. After the war he resigned from the Navy and worked again in industry, first with the meat packer Armour and Company and then with his father-in-law. He and his wife had a daughter who lived only four years. This time, and the years immediately after her death were crucial.

> We all have certain tactical events that happen in our lives. A certain thing happened in my life that was tactically important enough to force me to make utterly vital decisions about my life. I was married during World War I and I was in the Navy. We had a little child born and she caught the flu, then spinal meningitis and then infantile paralysis. We seemed to be able to overcome these attacks more or less. That is, she seemingly was cured though she had many traces of paralysis left. Just before she was four years old she caught pneumonia and died. (*Ideas and Integrities*)

Fuller contrasted the living conditions he was able to provide for his daughter in a New York apartment with those he had experienced in the Navy and observed the long delay in bringing new technologies into housing and building in general. He joined his father-in-law in business. His father-in-law had invented a new building construction material and technique. Based on the invention, they set up factories and constructed hundreds of buildings. Ultimately though, they lost the company in what might now be called a hostile takeover.

When he found himself thrust out of the business he feared he would not be able to provide for his wife and new-born daughter. He considered suicide. However, he told himself

> You do not have the right to eliminate yourself, you do not belong to you. You belong to the universe. The significance of you will forever remain obscure to you, but you may assume that you are fulfilling your significance if you apply yourself to converting all your experience to the highest advantage of others....

Thus in 1927 he "decided to peel off from conventional livelihood preoccupations and to enter into a period of research and development" which turned out to last many years (Ideas and Integrities, p.36). For two years he stopped speaking as he felt that he had been using the words he had learned by imitation without really understanding their meaning.

In his writings and even more in his inventions Fuller emphasized the positive. He believed that convincing people to change their behavior through laws and politics was ultimately futile. He observed that people were slow to adopt new ways of thinking and slower to change their behaviors based on their thinking. To change patterns of behavior it was necessary to bring new physical means into existence, after which people would use them if they had need of them. Inventing these new means usually did involve a laborious, often negative, process of eliminating everything that did not work to arrive at a residue of what might work. But this work needed to be undertaken at the initiative of the individual who had to take care to build and sustain personal credibility. Fuller's maxim was "do not show half-finished work".

Fuller became known first of all as an inventor and throughout his life he stressed the importance of reducing ideas to practice. By that he meant creating physical objects that embodied the functions intended by the designer. Among these were his "Dymaxion" automobile and house, an integral bathroom that could be mass-produced in a factory, and most famously the geodesic dome.

Fuller was a highly competent publicist for his ideas. In the 1920s he founded a journal called *4D* to promote his ideas. In the 1930s he worked at Time, Incorporated. In 1940, Fortune magazine published a feature article by him showing how during the past 10 years industry had continued to develop in spite of the Depression which reduced overall economic activity.

During World War II, Fuller worked for the U.S. government and at one point was given the task of preparing a report on the priorities for the industrialization and economic development of Brazil. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet Union was engaged in the execution of successive 5-year plans for industrialization and bought whole factories from companies in the West, including the U.S. For example, Ford Motor Company set up factories for producing trucks in the Soviet Union. As part of his research for the report, Fuller interviewed many of the engineers from the U.S. who had gone to the Soviet Union during the Depression of the 1930s. The engineers had witnessed how the Soviet Union was going about its industrialization and Fuller used this information in his report. This knowledge became part of the basis for Fuller's understanding of the complexities of industrial planning on a comprehensive scale and formed one of the bases for his World Game initiative.

In the late 1940s, Fuller joined the faculty of the highly experimental Black Mountain College in North Carolina. There he encountered the dancer Merce Cunningham, the sculptor Albert Lanier, and the artist Ruth Asawa, and the novelist, poet, social critic and gestalt psychologist Paul Goodman. In the 1960s and 1970s Fuller entertained and challenged audiences of thousands with his seemingly rambling but actually well-thought-through discourses on history, cosmology, geometry, and the fundamental principles of design.

Ivan Illich

In the 1960s Ivan Illich was one of the most important priests in North America. He was at the center of the upheavals in the Catholic Church surrounding Vatican II and its aftermath. The controversial Center for Intercultural Documentation of Cuernavaca (Mexico) that he had founded in 1961 was bringing together thinkers and social activists from all over the world and a steady stream of publications flowed from their encounters. Today, Illich's work continues to be known in Europe but he is less remembered in the United States.

Illich was a priest, a scholar, a rigorous theologian, and a highly radical social critic and activist. He was a leader of great daring and originality. When he was ordained, he chose to serve as a parish priest in New York rather than train to join the diplomatic corps of the Vatican. In New York he found himself among the influx of Puerto Ricans and quickly became fluent in Spanish (adding it to the 11 other languages he already spoke). At Fordham University, he organized the first major open-air festival in New York for the celebration of San Juan Day (the patron saint of Puerto Rico) at which 35,000 people attended.

When he was Vice-Rector of the University of Puerto Rico, Illich had created the Institute for Intercultural Communications. Its function was to train priests from the U.S. in Latin American traditions so they would stop trying to impose their own (mainly Irish-American) culture on the peoples of Latin America. In 1961, he created CIDOC, the Center for Intercultural Documentation of Cuernavaca (Mexico) for much the same purpose, but on a larger scale and with a new mission. CIDOC was founded with the support of Fordham University, of Cardinal Spellman and of Cardinal Cushing as well as the archbishop Méndez Arceo.

For 15 years CIDOC brought tens of thousands North Americans into understanding Latin American culture, with emphasis on ridding them of their complacent belief in the superiority of North American culture and institutions. It was considered the best place in America to learn Spanish and indirectly fostered the creation of many other schools using the same intensive

methods based on small classes with native speakers. It published numerous works of scholarship on the sociology, the religious history of Latin America as well as tracts of social criticism and scholarship. And it offered classes on these topics and fostered new ways of thinking and practice. Paolo Freire taught there as did Harvey Cox. The mariachi Mass, the popular Mass based on the folk music of Latin America, was created at CIDOC at Illich's request and first performed there before becoming the regular Mass of the cathedral in Cuernavaca officiated by Archbishop Méndez Arceo. (I attended a Mass led by Méndez Arceo there in 1972).

Illich was extremely disciplined in his life and his work. At times of crisis and decision in his life he undertook extended fasts and retreats. In her April, 1970 *New Yorker* profile of Illich Francine du Plessix Gray relates that

> "[i]n moments of crisis or decision throughout his career, Illich has imposed on himself many austere disciplines -- fasts, retreats, pilgrimages -- of a kind that many of his contemporaries consider outdated. At the age of eighteen, when he decided to be a priest, he had gone into a thirty-day retreat under a Jesuit spiritual director to decide whether he should become a Jesuit. In 1959 he had undertaken a forty-day meditation at a monastery in the Sahara."

He walked and hitchhiked over three thousand miles from village to village in South America. When he went to Mexico he slept out at the pyramids of the Aztecs and Toltecs, saying that he wanted to get to know their gods. When he wanted to go to Mexico City from Cuernavaca he would walk over the mountain rather than take a bus.

Fundamentally, in his social criticism, in his critique of the institutions of industrial society, Illich was engaged in a theological argument. He was arguing against the establishment of religion, whether of the church, the school, of medicine, or of technology. This argument was at the core of his life's work. Illich's ideas about education and about technology were much misunderstood at the time, and perhaps since. He was not seeking to abolish schools nor was he opposed to the use of technology in the service of human well being. What he opposed was how schools had become established in society, in the manner of an established church - not merely supported by the state but endowed, through law and habit in effect as the sole means for secular salvation where the issue was not learning but credentialing and where schools had a monopoly on the resources available for supporting education. Similarly, did not oppose the development and use of tools and machines to sustain human life, and specifically to repair defects. For example, insulin injections can help a diabetic live, but do not promise her a better life than someone who does not have diabetes. He opposed enshrining technology and technological advance as goods and ends in their own right.

He went always to the root of the purpose of the technology in question, without being distracted by discussions over technical means or political feasibility. In discussing technologies for the movement of people from place to place he was adamant that transportation was never a need. He would say that people by and large do not need to be transported, that is to be carried from place to place. They need to go from place to place, which is transit. And most people are endowed with legs with which they can walk. For him, the role of technology would be to enhance people's ability to move. For example, the bicycle would enable people, still using their legs, to move farther and faster with less output of energy.

Illich opposed the reification of education. He objected to talk about the need to get an education or to provide people with education as though it were a commodity. He argued that learning could be separated from schools. Schools were concerned with the custody of children, providing places for children to be put and looked after. Schools also were concerned with credentialing, with certifying that people had passed certain requirements enabling them to enter particular professions. But learning and education could and did take place outside of schools.

Illich spoke and wrote sarcastically about the school as a sacred cow. He contended that schools had taken the place of the Church as a means of salvation. In his address to a graduating class of the University of Puerto Rico when he was Vice Rector of that institution, he asserted,

> The school has become the established church of secular times. The modern school had its origins in the impulse toward unversal schooling, which began two centuries ago as an attempt to incorporate everyone into the industrial state.

Illich sought to write an epitaph to industrial society. Illich's method in examining techology for example was to emphasize the limits that needed to be put on it. He was acutely aware of the tendency to reify human desires into putative "needs" that institutions would then be organized to service. He objected strongly to institutions and technologies which were not self-limiting.

Illich spoke many languages fluently. But although he may have felt more at home in German that in some of the others, having spent so much time moving from one language and country to another, he had no "native" language, no culture whose presuppositions he simply accepted unthinkingly. He spoke with great precision and care and, like his writing, his manner of speaking incorporated layers of meaning. In highly compressed form he would move rapidly from passing reference to the popular shibboleths about the topic at hand through layers of less familiar facts to highly original critiques and commentaries. I found his manner of speaking and writing exhilarating but, for people expecting a more pedestrian advocacy or analysis, he could be difficult to comprehend.

At a panel discussion in the 1980s a member of the audience told Illich that he was "not communicating", to which Illich replied "I do not want to communicate; I want to speak." For him, to "communicate" was precisely not what a human being, and certainly not what a thinking human being ought to do. To communicate (in keeping with scientific theories of communication) would be to select from a finite set of possible messages the one to be sent on a given occasion. That is, through "communication" nothing new has the opportunity to enter the world. Rather, he was seeking, through the inspiration and in the company of another, to bring new concepts and new perceptions into the world. And, he refused to be considered a type of communication device like a microphone or a transmitter. For him, meaning was created between the speaker and the attentive listener, not a message sent from one to the other.

In 1982 Illich was a Regent's Professor at the University of California at Berkeley. He chose this opportunity to develop a study of Gender. His critique of gender followed on the pattern of his prior critique of the foundations of industrial society: schools, technology, medicine. In each he developed a radical critique of a central institution as a lens through which to view the deep structure of modern society. In each case he challenged widely held assumptions and presuppositions about the nature of the world. To mount these challenges he researched widely through history, literature, philosophy, and anthropology finding exemplars of how societies were and had been different, how humans had organized themselves and lived successfully in

circumstances and with customs and beliefs radically different from those assumed by contemporary industrial society.

During the 1970s and into the 1980s the concept of gender was highly controversial. Feminist scholars and activists held at that time that differences in the roles played by men and women were accidents of the organization of society, inevitably prejudicial to women, and should be abolished in the pursuit of equality. In broad terms, it was believed by many feminists that calling attention to differences between genders was retrograde and reactionary. Illich challenged that belief, pointing out that although the specific roles played by men and women in traditional societies at different times varied, each gender had distinct roles. In one society women stayed home tending the garden while men ranged abroad with the herds, while in another society men stayed put and women went out as traders. Illich suggested that men and women differentiated themselves in traditional societies as fundamental means of establishing conviviality, living side by side but each having distinct roles and places.

At the time this view was anathema to the feminists of the University. They criticized him bitterly, going not merely to the facts and logic of what he said but the rhetoric he used to construct his argument. He was called a reactionary and a fascist..) Illich was deeply affected by this critique. Subsequently the feminist line of argument changed, so that differences between the genders were celebrated. Actually, the concept of gender that Illich developed in the course of the seminar and in the book *Gender*, published in 1983, (as a difference that is socially determined and particular to each society) became the dominant way of looking at the questions of difference. However he was given no credit for the concept and his work on gender is rarely cited in the published studies. David Cayley points out that *Gender* was the last book Illich published with a mass market commercial publisher.

Illich did publish two more editions of *Medical Nemesis* and it appears that the medical profession took his critique seriously enough for it to have an effect on medical education.

He accepted an appointment as professor of Technology, Values and Society at Pennsylvania State University where for some years he continued research and teaching, alternating times between Pennsylvania and the University of Bremen, Germany where he was also a professor.

In 1969 he had been called to the Vatican to face questioning by the Congregration for the Doctrine of the Faith regarding his work. Following that inquisition he renounced nearly all the duties of the priesthood but continued to consider himself part of the Church. I recall how in a conversation in 1972 in Cuernavaca, only a few years later, Illich alluded to these events and made clear the difference in his mind between the Church as She (the community of the faithful) and the Church as It (the organization and the hierarchy). He clung with deep love to the Church as She.

In his later years, Illich returned more openly to work in the theology which had been at the root of his critiques of industrial society all along. Toward the end of his life, in a series of interviews with David Cayley, he did express his thoughts on theology. These interviews, published after Illich's death as *The Rivers North of the Future* show how strongly Illich's views on society were founded in his theology.

By the late 1970s it was evident to Illich that the changes he had sought in society would not happen. There was no place outside the institutions from which they could be addressed and

hence no way for them to be disestablished. They might function less and less well to achieve their ostensible purposes, and people in them might be more and more dissatisfied, but there would be no radical change of direction toward a society based in freedom.

After the 1970s Illich ceased to be so much in the public eye and his work seemed to take a different turn, less activist and more reflective. This change was preceded by the closing of CIDOC in 1976. From the 1980s, Illich stopped trying to change the institutions of modern society and sought more intently "the submerged assumptions that had made [them] so intractable" (from Cayley's Introduction to *The Rivers North of the Future*, p. 18).

For 20 years Illich lived with a more and more prominent and painful tumor growing on his face. He decided not to have it removed, and lived publicly and courageously coping at every moment with this reminder of his mortality. He "accepted his affliction as his share in Christ's suffering.... [and] treated even his suffering as a gift" (Cayley p. 39).

Claudio Naranjo

Claudio Naranjo was a seminal figure in the flowering of the Human Potential and New Age movement in psychology and spirituality that began in California and centered around San Francisco and the Esalen Institute south of Monterey in the 1960s and 1970s. His work brought together gestalt psychotherapy, spiritual and meditation practices, psychopharmacology, and shamanism. He created almost single-handedly the still-controversial field of the enneatype as a means for diagnosis and psychological self-understanding and development. Today, Naranjo actively continues his exploration and practice in these fields in Europe and Latin America, but he is much less known in the United States.

Claudio Naranjo is at least as radical a figure, at least as paradoxical as Fuller or Illich. His work is wide-ranging: psychopharmacology and ethnopharmacology; music and musical interpretation; social criticism; psychotherapy; and psychological typology, the psychological explication of enneatypes for which he became famous. But his over-arching concern has been the ongoing spiritual development and evolution of the human organism, how people live and grow and transform through the course of a lifetime. It may be said that the New Age movement seeks to fuse religion, education, and psychotherapy. Naranjo celebrates this convergence.

Naranjo has lived in several worlds. He is fluent in languages. His work spans numerous disciplines of thought and human endeavor. As were Fuller and Illich, Naranjo is a person at home in the world of learning, for whom no area of human knowledge is closed.

Naranjo was born in Chile and educated for some years by an ideosyncratic private tutor before entering the school system. He learned piano and might have entered a career of musicianship and composition but instead studied medicine. After completing a psychiatric residency in Chile and working under the direction of Matte-Blanco, he came to the United States and studied and taught at Harvard, the University of Illinoi, the University of California, Berkeley and in other institutions. He was invited to teach and work at Esalen where he became the disciple of Fritz Perls.

After his work at Esalen, at the invitation of Willis Harman at SRI, he wrote a monograph on modalities of spiritual seeking (later published as *The One Quest*). He then returned to Chile and

underwent a profound transformation in connection with the enigmatic spiritual teacher Oscar Ichazo. Later he also experimented with a variety of spiritual practices including shamanism, Sufism, and Buddhism. He travelled to India and studied meditation and has worked extensively with the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Tartang Tulku Rinpoche.

In the U.S. during the 1970s, under the rubric SAT (Seekers After Truth), he led groups of spiritual seekers, giving them the benefit of his extensive explorations and engaging them with a variety of practices and a wide range of teachers. He rapidly developed a following of hundreds of people in groups located not only in Berkeley but in other cities in California and across the country. These groups, composed of people intensely working on their on psycho-spiritual development, seeking transformation and hoping for transcendence in the heady New Age atmosphere of the time, looked to him as a spiritual leader.

After a few years of meteoric activity with the groups in the U.S., he abandoned this work and sought a different direction, a different locale, and a different culture and ambiance for pursuing his mission. He ceased working with people in the U.S. and ceased to sponsor or inspire ongoing groups. Instead, he concentrated his activities in Latin America and Europe and changed the form of the work. Over the course of two decades he developed and perfected programs of time-limited workshops directed toward the training of psychotherapists. He shortened these programs, still called SAT, from three-months duration to one month and then to 10 days.

In the past few years these workshops, under new auspices, have been directed toward teachers and educators. These are the SAT for Education programs. The aim of this current project is to bring the benefits of a generation of experimentation in psychological transformation into the schools through the ongoing re-education of teachers.

Naranjo in his writing and teaching about personality emphasizes the negative. He shows in exquisite detail how personalities are shaped and formed by the deficiencies that people feel. People are governed by passions which derive from their acute (and usually unconscious) sense of lacking what they need in life. Even their virtues are constructed as means to relieve them of these deficiencies in socially acceptable ways. For Naranjo, human behavior grows out of what is missing. Unlike some popular writers about personality, he is rigorous in his focus on these negative elements.

Naranjo is an engaging man, full of humor with an attractive personality. However, his teachings, like Illich's, are difficult for many to follow comfortably. He approaches people and institutions not to comfort them with reassuring extensions of what they already believe and are prepared to do, but with radical critiques of their very foundations and personal myths.

Naranjo is interested in fostering freedom and autonomy (*End of Patriarchy,* p.54). His early book *The One Quest* is an exploration of many methods and paths to human development. It discusses psychological, religious and spiritual, and educational practices with the idea that these various practices and disciplines may be seen as different paths to a similar goal, and that even these different paths may have more similarities than had been understood at the time. In the first chapter, "An Introduction to the Quest for Growth", he points out that the book is "a work of theory and general ideas -- not one of description" and he is careful to say that he is not evaluating or comparing the different paths (p. 27). In general, he is rigorously careful not to indicate that one approach may be better than another. Rather, he contends that the difference between one path and another is less important than "the understanding and quality of the

persons who represent it" (p. 27). Thus, among the myriad paths to personal development, the key, like that of making a friend or finding a suitable mate, is to encounter and commit to the right person. There is no codifiable way of ensuring success through a defined technique.

Naranjo was an important developer of Gestalt psychology and today a majority of the Gestalt psychologists in training in Spain go through his SAT workshops there. In discussing the process of gestalt therapy he emphasizes that "the alternative to identification with a [limited] self-image is ... a direct contact with one's reality rather than a substitution of a 'better' self-image for the old one." In this emphasis, Naranjo reveals a difference between his goals and method and that of much of psychotherapy and even spiritual practices, especially those which aim either at making people happier or better adjusted to society. What he advocates through gestalt psychotherapy, in contrast with the method of "psychocybernetics" and other supportive psychotherapies based on helping a person change his/her self-image to one more open to experience, radical transformation. As he put it,

> Openness to experience that depends on a preconception of the self (however conducive to the experience the self-image may be) still does not make a person free. Such a preconception may be used as a crutch, a device, but still falls short of the aim, which is represented by a condition where openness to experience is unconditional, and constitutes its own reward. (One Quest, p. 134)

As a therapist and teacher, Naranjo strongly advocates the openness to experience that a person in touch with his own reality and not identified with a particular self-image can have. In describing personalities, he outlines in detail the obstacles and traps which lead people seemingly inevitably into one or another limited image of themselves, images which restrict their freedom. This negative method, detailing how people are not free, is outlined at length in his seminal book on the enneatypes *Character and Neurosis*. In his teaching today, Naranjo typically emphasizes the desirability of overcoming one's deficiencies, of "going against" one's tendencies in order to free oneself from habitual limits.

Woven through all of Naranjo's work is a consciousness of the place of mystery - in the world, in history, and as a foundation for creative life. In the final chapter of *The End of Patriarchy*, following a brief review of world problems as outlined in a 1974 report of the Director-General of UNESCO and in the 1984 *Encyclopedia of World Problems*, Naranjo describes the growth of a "new shamanism" as a contagion exploding beyond the bounds of any profession (e.g. beyond medicine, psychology or religion) and even beyond the notion of professionalism itself. As he puts it the "Dionysiac" spirit of shamanism is inherently at war with the "Apollonian" nature of industrial society (The End of Patriarchy, p. 121f).

Naranjo identified himself as a shaman, or neo-shaman, and includes within that category all manner of healers and transformative personages including Sigmund Freud and Fritz Perls as well as the myriads of self-discovered practitioners who have been called as wounded healers rather than trained professionals. While in general celebrating the explosion of interest in and practice of such "unprofessional" spirituality and unlicensed therapy, Naranjo does offer a brief caveat, and the brevity and somewhat apologetic nature of his caution is indicative of his own sympathy with the dionysiac style (by contrast with the severely disciplined style of Fuller and Illich):

> Many, surely, feel narcissistically stimulated in viewing themselves in the elevated and mysterious role of shaman -- and even that can be inspiring, not only for them but for others. I only want to suggest that we don't forget the distance between a sorcerer's apprentice and a true sorcerer. A shaman is not just one who has known altered states of consciousness or who embraces a magical view of the world, but one who has come to ripeness through a deep transformation. (The End of Patriarchy, p. 133-4)

Naranjo is fundamentally a mystic and he writes as a visionary. In *The End of Patriarchy*, he offered "an optimistic interpretation" of the transformation he saw, or wished to see, occuring (p. xiii). His interpretation seems to rely less on analysis of the actual conditions of the people in the world and how they life materially than on the psychology of the individual. The transformation he sees possible is a transformation of the individual. Through this transformation of individuals somehow the society is to be transformed. He repeats, in End of Patriarchy (p. xvi), "many are convinced that we are coming into a new age, 'an age of Aquarius,' an age which as Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin anticipated, may constitute the supreme realization of our species."

The kinds of "resources" Naranjo offers as agents of the transformation he seeks are methods and techniques of personal psychological work. Some of these are done in groups, but the "transformation" is personal and not directly societal. His way of seeing these as socially transformative is to advocate their use in the schools so that, through teachers who have experienced the processes of psychological work, the students (including children) may be transformed.

Naranjo's construction of his ideas is in some ways, and perhaps at base, frankly mystical. He points out that the essays in The End of Patriarchy "constitute variations on a single idea that the transformative change entails and is achieved through the reintegration of a threefoldness" (p. xiv). This "threefoldness" is variously identified as father-mother-child, as masculinity-femininity-childlikeness, as body-feelings-intellect, and as the parts of the brain identified by Paul MacLean as reptilian-mammalian-human. This threefoldness shows up as well as the underlying structure of the psychology of the enneatypes where the basis of personality is revealed in the dominance of one or another of three primary passions that govern the orientation of a person to the world.

Naranjo seems committed to the idea of what he calls "threefoldness" and uses this concept extensively in his analysis of numerous phenonmena. He uses the term "threefoldness" in preference to the word "trinity" and does not seem to invoke the Christian term. His commitment to the idea of threefoldness goes beyond convenience. For example, in *The End of Patriarchy* he is at pains to point out that while

> "[t]he fact that in the second chapter I address the fourfold of body, feelings, intellect and spirit is no exception to the theme of threefoldness, for I do so in the context of an understanding of spirit as both unification and transcendence of the physical, affective and mental realms" (p. xiv).

The mystical idea that the phenomena of the world may be understood best in terms of threes and multiples of three pervades his work. It may derive from his fidelity to the vision of his mentor Totila Albert (a Chilean artist, sculptor, poet and visionary).

Naranjo's thinking, like that of Illich, is at odds with the underlying assumptions of industrial and post-industrial society. But Naranjo works from very different premises. It would be hard to characterize his outlook as theological. If it were, it is a very different type of theology than that of Illich. Naranjo names his enemy "the patriarchal structure of the mind and society" (*The End of Patriarchy*, p. 101).

In "The Agony of the Patriarchal Order" Naranjo takes up explicitly the theme of the societal change he hoped for in the 1960s but which did not occur. In the 1960s, Naranjo was fully engaged in what he saw as "the death of a culture and the birth of another." (End of Patriarchy, p.1) At that time, his attention focused on the "New Age" and "consciousness revolution" that seemed to him to point to an imminent birth or re-birth of a new culture. He, like others at the time, hoped that it might simply be possible to leave behind the old culture, that a change in personal values could come from within individuals and spread by infection from one to another. The change in culture would occur like the spread of a new and vibrant religion. From the perspective of the 1990s when *The End of Patriarchy* appeared, and even more today, it could be seen much more clearly that it is the death and not the birth of a culture that we are called upon to experience.

Naranjo has been a member-associate of the Club of Rome. The group became widely known in the early 1970s as a result of the publication of a Report entitled *The Limits to Growth*. This study, based on fairly simple computer models, showed in a variety of contexts how (in Naranjo's words) "everything which was being called progress entailed an imminent danger" (p. 2) It showed how unlimited industrial growth inevitably had catastrophic effects in the depletion of resources and the destructive pollution of the environment. At the time, the Report attracted much attention due to the prestige of its source and the publicity it was given. It was highly controversial not so much due to the techniques it used but because it challenged in a highly visible way the underlying assumption of the society: that economic growth was a good and that the economy could grow itself out of whatever problem in which it found itself. However, the Report did not challenge an even deeper assumption: the identity of economy and the culture.

Today it is painful to see that both of these assumptions still underlie the public choices before us. To me this is a further sign that, at least in the West, we continue to live through the death agony of the old and not the birth or rebirth of a new culture. We are witnessing today effects of the continued evolution of the industrial economy similar to those predicted 35 years ago in the Report (e.g. in global warming and the decline of petroleum production). Yet movements to change the direction of this evolution toward a sustainable economy or to change the underlying values of the society in a humane way are not widely in evidence.

Perhaps the new culture that is arising to replace the old is coming in the form of the strong communitarian ideologies of what are called fundamentalist religions and cults. Most of these seem to have values very different from those that Naranjo would espouse. And their relations with one another promise unending warfare rather than the peaceful millennium envisioned by New Age thinkers.

Some Reflections

I was attracted to Fuller, Illich, and Naranjo from somewhere beyond a consciousness of their thought or what they said. They offered me a vision of meaning, a way to approach the world

whole, to speak to the whole world-situation. So I approached them and learned something from them about how to see the world. My relation with them as teachers was unlike my relation with other teachers. With them, I was touched on a deeper level than learning. They touched my desire for meaning and significance.

Fuller, Illich, and Naranjo all lived heroic lives. Each found his own course in a world not always conducive to what he was doing. Each worked tirelessly toward goals that changed with the circumstances of the world but reflected underlying constancies of intention. Each lived and worked with deep faith in the value of what he was doing. Most important, each sought an independent point from which to stand in order to critique and influence the course of human evolution. Their ability to find and maintain this locus of leverage, in Fuller's words, this "trim tab", was central to the challenge they faced: how to be sufficiently within society's institutions and common discourse to affect them while not succumbing to the strictures and limits. Each in their own way walked the edge. This quality shows particularly in their written discourse. Each found it necessary to stretch the language in order to say what he wanted. Fuller's sentence structure and vocabulary can be tortuous and easily parodied. Illich was notorious for the high sarcasm with which he wrote and the affected style in which he spoke. Naranjo's serious writing is sometimes stilted, sometimes maddeningly vague not out of sloppiness but through conflating categories of discourse. In spite of these obstacles to "communication" each was able because of the richness of his experience, the breadth of his vision, and the height of his purpose to attract, enormously capable colleagues, collaborators, and students as well as a wide following and to achieve great social credit for their work and their personal integrity.

Each of them also lived long enough to see the world change under his feet, to see his aspirations for a better world fall away. While I knew them at different times, I see them as contemporaries in the hopeful, tumultuous, tragic world of the 1960s and 1970s . Fuller had a long career before this time, but in the 1960s and 70she was most in demand as a speaker to large and diverse audiences and when his books were most widely read. Likewise Illich was most influential and prolific in the 1960s and 70s, when CIDOC was at its height as a center bringing together thinkers and activists from all over the world to develop radical and creative critiques of the major institutions of industrial society. Naranjo continues his work with numerous student to this day, but it was in the 1960s and 70s that he found the broadest and most diverse audiences and was able, along with others, to envisage a radical change in society emanating from the ferment of personal and social experimentation going on in California. By 1980 it was evident that the hoped-for changes would not occur. Fuller interpreted the Soviet invasion of Afganistan in 1978 as a sign that the undemocratic heartland powers of Asia would overcome the more democratic maritime societies. Illich closed CIDOC in 1976. Later he noted how the institutions he had advocated disestablishing had evolved into systems closed to radical critique as the people working within them came to see themselves no longer as critical agents but as parts of the system. Naranjo may still hope to transform society by transforming education (as the title of a recent book would indicate) but the humanistic social changes he imagined imminent in the 1960s and 1970s were thoroughly swept away in waves of repression and disillusionment.

The nature of a hero lies in the struggle in which he engages, not the outcome. Victorious or not (and no victory can be more than partial), a hero finds within himself the elán to continue, the courage to face what comes, and the vision to know his own goals.

Martin Cohen - June 2007