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Illich and the Education Business

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CROSS CURRENTS

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Stanley Hauerwas

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MICHAEL TRUE, ALMA D'HEURLE and JOEL FEIMER



A QUARTERLY REVIEW to explore the implications of Christianity for our times

theologian uneasy in his orthodoxy, but only more comfortable in the old, traditional setting. And ultimately, what will the theologian do with the proof that the poet provides of the world's goodness? What are the implications for religion, for the church, for Christianity if a poet such as Roethke and a host of other writers since Milton find a sacred world without (or even in spite of) a traditional theological framework?

While the church has become increasingly self-conscious and theology increasingly faddish about their mission in the world, poetry—holding fast to its essentially pagan origins—has become more confident; since the Second World War its audience has increased, its politics have become more radical. Its celebration of love, of life, of nature has seldom needed and in fact has consistently challenged the narrow "sacramental" vision of Christian theology. Even so obviously a Christian writer as Flannery O'Connor has said that the natural world must be seen as good if one is to understand the force and power of evil in the world.

The poet's reconciliation with life is no easy accommodation. As in Roethke's case, it implies a revolution in consciousness that calls all standards of judgment into question. As the speaker says in Roethke's "In a Dark

Time," "What's madness but nobility of soul/ At odds with circumstance . . . A man goes far to find out what he is—/ Death of the self in a long tearless night,/ All natural shapes blazing unnatural light." Is theology prepared to deal with the implications of such modern manifestations of faith? Judging from its traditional use of poetry, one would guess that it is not.

The future of poetry may be immense, as Matthew Arnold said a century ago, but until "religious" people, including theologians, give some outward manifestation of faith in the world's goodness, the future of religion looks very bleak indeed. Poets—all through the so-called modern religious crisis—have attested to the sacramental reality of life. Had the church and/or the theologian been as attentive to the world as the poet has been, had they given as abundant witness to their faith in and commitment to it as the poet has, there may have never been a need for the kind of apologetic that burdens much recent theological writing. For all its weighty generalizing and even its skillful reading of Roethke, *The Wild Prayer of Longing* is finally a rather predictable treatise (questions posed by a professor, through an academic press, in academic jargon, for an academic audience) that belongs to the same defensive and conservative school.

MICHAEL TRUE

ILlich AND THE EDUCATION BUSINESS

A Call for Institutional Revolution.
New York: Doubleday, 1971, \$4.95.

There is a marked Socratic stamp on Illich's approach to social problems. The range is wide—the Puerto Rican migration into New York, attitudes toward learning a second language, foreign policy, overpopulation, education—but the approach to each subject

is similar. Illich first presented most of the material in the book in talks to groups of individuals—missionaries learning Spanish, population experts, those attending a commencement at the University of Puerto Rico—who had claims to a real interest in the topics he discusses, and apparently approached their areas of interest on the

basis of sound and tested principles.

Like Socrates, Illich challenges the basic and often cherished assumptions of these groups in a manner which, though respectful and even playful, is deliberately stunning in its effect; the population expert, for example, is reminded that all the while he denounces, as inhuman and depersonalizing, the "natural law" arguments of the Church against birth prevention, his own modes of thinking in terms of population curves and massive indoctrination concerning birth control techniques might be even more inhuman and depersonalizing. A group of language students is told that the person who speaks a foreign language "better than the natives," by this very fact may be indicating that his quest for personal superiority makes him incapable of truly communicating with the "natives" at all. Even at a commencement address, Illich cannot resist suggesting to the graduates that their education was fundamentally a miseducation.

Like Socrates, too, Illich's challenging of his interlocutors' assumption is not malicious and anti-social in intent, but rather a manifestation of a profound social awareness. Socrates made it clear to Melitus that an intelligent man would not harm those with whom he must live; as for Illich, his probes are those of a radical humanist who is very much present to the problems he addresses as affecting a human community with which he is identified.

The Marxist claim that at a specific point the capitalist finds it in his interest to create a need for his goods even when there is no real need for them, has been extended by Erich Fromm to the realm of psychopathology. Fromm's claim that there are individuals who create a dependency of others on themselves, even when the others have no real need for them, has been extended by Illich into the realm

of education. He shows how the campaign to make people feel more important and secure because they consume soft drinks and drive in a big car, and correspondingly to make others feel alienated for lack of these things, is perfectly applicable to the world of learning. Campaigns to sell sets of so-called Great Books of the Western World, for example, were designed to make people measure their self-esteem in terms of the number of Great Books they had read, even if the compilers of these relatively expensive sets considered obsolete scientific treatises of Galen or Ptolemy as Great Books. One was conditioned by every technique of persuasion to buy the whole package and measure his cultural worth, and the worth of others, in direct proportion to the amount of the package one had consumed.

The merchandizing of learning was carried to an extreme with the creation of a universal demand for a college education at a time when the educational institutions could hardly meet the demand. College credits became like stock. The more credits one accumulated, the more prestige, status and public money to buy still additional educational merchandise became available to him.

Many colleges did a land office business with general studies, afternoon, and evening sessions. Graduate students were paid low salaries to teach large classes of students paying relatively high tuition. The need to complete their own doctoral programs led to incredible machinations by these instructors to devote minimal time to the students in these courses. Demands by deans to have a complete set of marks submitted by an instructor in 72 hours time made the proper scoring of end-term examinations somewhat farcical. Relating to the individual student in a common love of

knowledge was a rare occurrence in such a situation. In some institutions it was a common practice for senior members of a department to have teaching assistants mark all final essay-type examinations. As far as relating to students is concerned, a taped lecture would have served better than the professor himself. Finally, the young instructors for the most part did not fare much better than their own students when it came to forming a genuine community of scholars with their graduate school professors.

One is forced to ask: Is the educational establishment a business that is shortchanging its customers? Is formal education destructive of community? Illich's analysis is descriptive, yet also prophetic. Public monies should benefit all the people, but we are now asked to support a system that makes the majority of the people feel unworthy and deficient, and encourages a small minority who have learned the techniques of manipulating the knowledge market to pursue private goals at public expense. Illich predicts that as more and more people become aware of the game that is going on, the game itself will become more and more an object of ridicule. The Latin American physicians pursuing advanced studies in the United States, while people in their own country are dying for lack of basic medical care, will be regarded more as objects of scorn than as reasons for national pride. Illich points out that insecure individuals can become as hooked on "advanced degrees and certificates" as others are on alcohol and heroin. When one considers that, both in capitalist and communist nations, more public money is going into the educational business than any other business, it becomes apparent that the real division today is more between people who are aware of how formal educa-

tion shortchanges society and those who are not yet aware of it.

It is not surprising that Illich's analysis should arouse the ire of humanists such as Sydney Hook, who have a firm hold on the knowledge market and who function as high priests of the educational establishment. Nevertheless, in criticizing the educational establishment by a special application of the theory of surplus-value, Illich is articulating the criticism of the public schools in terms that anyone who has grown up familiar with the humanistic and democratic thrust within socialism cannot fail to understand. Neither can anyone familiar with the public school system deny that there is within it a system of rewards for teachers and supervisors who have the most "credits" in their subject and who have achieved the highest scores on tests, just as there is a system of punishment for those who do not have the "required courses." A habit of mind that would evaluate self and others in terms of formal academic achievement, instead of one's capacity to serve the students one teaches, is pervasive in most public schools. The academic equivalent of the "exchange personality," an aberration so graphically described by Erich Fromm in *The Sane Society*, abounds in most public schools. Those who succeed within the educational establishment are all too often the dehumanized victims of a morbid dependency on examination schedules and regents exams.

Socrates once said that gratitude is the proper attitude toward someone who disabuses us of our illusions and complacency. Unfortunately, this was not the response Socrates received, nor the response Sydney Hook and Albert Shanker have given to Illich. Nevertheless, many members of the Black, Puerto Rican and other ethnic com-

munities, who are deeply conscious that public education has been failing them, will be grateful to Illich for articulating their grievances and for

lending them a few Socratic tools for their next round of negotiations with the educational establishment.

GERARD FARLEY

THE FEMININE: JUNG AND "PLAYBOY"

Ann Belford Ulanov, *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971. \$10.75.

Ann Belford Ulanov's *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology* comes at the crescent of a wave of publications on women. Since the prime-time attention given the issue of the feminine movement seems to be already on the wane, there is a real danger that this excellent book may be submerged in an oversaturated book market.

The Feminine deserves attention for many reasons. It is a penetrating study that could be of great assistance to men and women who are grappling with the task of charting their inner world, and its restating and clarification of Jung's view of the feminine as a major style of being human that belongs to both sexes is a most timely emphasis. It could help direct the feminine movement beyond the fight for women's rights and the assimilation of the experience of oppression to a broader ideology that aims at the emancipation of both men and women from culturally determined sex roles. In its analysis of the relation between the feminine and the religious functions of the psyche, the book also sheds light on some important aspects of the contemporary religious malaise.

Ulanov begins her study with a lucid and helpful summary of Jung's theory of personality, which takes up a quarter of the book. It provides the context for the analysis of the concept of the feminine, which is the essential

part of the work. Illustrations from the author's therapeutic experience are skillfully used to illustrate Jung's "symbolic" approach and to give the reader a feeling for his "synthetic-constructive" method.

Jung's view is compared with the Freudian and Judeo-Christian psychology of the sexes, which Ulanov designates as the "biological approach," and the more current socio-anthropological study of sexuality, which is characterized as the "cultural approach." This comparison highlights the particular qualities of Jung's symbolic method, and underscores his view of the feminine as a mode of being, a psychic element quite apart from its biological existence, belonging to, and constituting a central shaping factor in the personality of both men and women. For Jung, "the feminine and its psychology describe not only factors which form a specific female identity but also certain modalities of being which belong to all human beings" (p. 142). These modalities can be known only indirectly as they express themselves in characteristic images, behavior patterns and emotional responses.

Jung gives no precise definition of the feminine. Subject matter relevant to a theory of feminine psychology is presented only sketchily in loosely woven and vaguely defined insights scattered throughout a lifetime's work. Jungian scholars were left with the task of clarifying and extending the master's "aperçus." Emma Jung, his wife, was the first to undertake this work; she was followed by such notable