

DIETER DUHM

TOWARDS A NEW CULTURE

FROM REFUSAL TO RE-CREATION

OUTLINE OF AN ECOLOGICAL
AND HUMANE ALTERNATIVE

III - THE TRUTH OF THE LIVING

VERLAG MEIGA

TOWARDS A NEW CULTURE BY DIETER DUHM

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More relevant to current events than ever, this book can become a source of inspiration and study-material for all who want to develop and co-create a peace culture on this planet.

The exchange of trendsetting thoughts of a real positive perspective is an important political act within the current worldwide protest against the global economic and political system. The question of a comprehensive alternative model to the actual lifestyle becomes existential for many people.

We hope that these thoughts will reach wide circulation and ever-increasing profile.

It is time for comprehensive socio-cultural cooperation between people from the most diverse movements and backgrounds. It is time to overcome the apparent borders on behalf of the co-creation of sustainable alternative models for the coming generations – guided by ethical principles such as respect, non-violence, truth, mutual support, responsible participation and a comprehensive vision of a new culture.

Our wish is for this book to meet open ears and hearts, and for its humanitarian and compassionate impulse to thrive.

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FEAR AS A BIOLOGICAL DISEASE OF CULTURE

The alienation felt by people today is, at its deepest level, a biological one. Our cultural disease consists of the loss of the Living and of the sense for the Living. This can be seen in every modern hospital, including the strange types of medicine practised there. Concerning the questions of life modern man has become fatally stupid – fatal in the literal sense. In West Germany someone dies of cancer every four minutes and the number of “psychosomatics” is enormous. Our poisoned and congested environment and the overly specialised working systems with their fragmented detailed work cause neurotic and bodily tensions and bioenergetic blockages in a large part of the population. These factors, combined with an overall loss of direct human communication and the desolation of human relations, leaves contemporary lives in a state of inner constriction that deprives them of calm, depth, and space for the fundamental experience of the Living. *Constriction = fear*. The biological disease of culture of our civilisation is fear, fear as result of bioenergetic and soul blockages. And fear is love’s adversary.

We need to fully see and understand the extent to which “humaneness”, understanding, and tolerance, gentleness and consideration, care and sympathy, are in truth the result of fear. If one has ever been a clear witness of the exchanges taking place in the sentimental theatre of words and emotions we all take part in, then one has an inkling of what it means to build a community without fears and lies. This is the most fundamental change that we can make. We do not usually notice the fear because our commonly accepted moral agreements, cultured conversations, ideologies, and habits constructed of it. Fear is “bound” within the system that we take

for granted in our daily lives. It is the major psychic ferment emotional catalyst of our entire culture. Most people cannot even imagine what it would mean to love without fear, as what they term “love” is connected so plainly to the fear of losing someone, sexual fears, fear of authority, of rejection, of being alone, of betrayal, that the absurdity of the situation is no longer recognised. Only the results become visible as jealousy, illness, depression, and broken relationships. Love without fear is without doubt the opposite of what is termed love in our culture.

The truth of these interrelations belong to the most incredible aspect that our time has to offer. Anyone who does not see this, at least in part, should close this book at once, because to him what follows will seem pure nonsense.

LIFE RESEARCH AS THE SCIENCE OF THE FUTURE

Building a culture based on the laws of life requires a deepening understanding of elementary life processes. Elementary processes are universal processes that are connected with all levels of life, from the simplest plant realms to the soul regions of the human. They are connected with germination, growth, and development, with rise and fall and re-arising.

This drama of life is reflected in the inner situation of the human – in the process of maturation, in the dynamics of drives, longings, and in the structure of conflicts. The same laws of the Living operate both in the inner nature of humans and in outer nature. Cultural work has to be oriented towards these laws if we wish to regain our sense of biological, energetic, and mental-spiritual identity.

Life research is a science of the future, perhaps even the science of the future. What we can say about the functioning and structures of the living world has a temporary character. But even the little we can see is contradictory to our habitual

ways of thinking, the ways we formulate scientific theories, or our concepts of “objectivity”, how we see our lives, how we structure the conditions of our lives, our morals, traditional medicine, pedagogy, or architecture. We can, with certainty, say that a culture and society oriented towards the laws of life will develop along principles that are diametrically opposed to those developed by our present-day culture and society. Life research relates to common science as sight relates to the anatomical structure of the eye.

The natural order of the living realm is fundamentally different from man-made systems (technical, juristic, governmental, military). It is more complex, unified, open, and less susceptible to dysfunction. Most importantly, it contains the impetus for development. Its functional principles are rhythm, communication, resonance, lightness, radiation, tension, pulsation, and polarity. An incredible precision is achieved through imprecise methods, such as touching, feeling, oscillation, interference, etc. Not until we acquire a new system of thinking will we be able to understand the extraordinary functional principles on which life is based, step by step. We need a new philosophy of the Living, and a new kind of biology to shed light on the magic of life, its “occult” laws and psi-forces, its mysterious processes of communication, its principles of organisation and growth, its logic that governs functions and developments in nature, its fantastic technology, its energetic processes of communication and resonance, and its pulsating, radiating, metamorphosing nature – this biology as the comprehensive science of the Living will be a central theme for the new cultural era.

Research has to do with cognition. Seeking insight is no human luxury, for it lies at the heart of evolution, and evolution is a process of growing cognitive capacity. Our sense organs are rudimentary organs of cognition. Perhaps the greatest and most accessible secret of the living world is its endowment

with sensory organs. They serve perception and communication. Obviously, the guideline for evolution was the development of increasingly sensitive and far-reaching organs of contact for perception and communication. Perception and communication seem somehow to be fundamental to the living world. Why? What secret of providence was in this way meant to stay readable in life? Sensuality is perception and contact. It is, therefore, associated with cognition. The evolution of life has brought forth different forms of cognition, for example, sensory perception, intuition and the intellect. The intellect is the youngest and most inexperienced child in the evolution of cognitive life. The faculties of cognition through sensory perception and intuition must be intact for the intellect to function in a meaningful way in terms of evolution. Since these faculties are no longer intact life research requires a larger setting where sensuality and intuition may regenerate. An organism that is awake, with open pores, through which energy can freely flow, is a single sensory organ to experience the world. This experience is collected, reflected upon, and steered in the centre of consciousness. Cognition of the Living means opening the senses and awakening this centre.

CONTACT AND TRUTH

Cognition has everything to do with truth. But what is truth? Before it can be discovered and formulated intellectually, it already exists in an entirely different form. "Truth", says Wilhelm Reich, "is immediate, full contact between life that perceives and life that is being perceived."

This is one of the most profound statements in the theory of cognition. This means that truth is not primarily a matter of thinking but of *contact*. However, contact is a sensual and basic bioenergetic function of the living world as all living organisms are in contact with others. Thus truth is also – as

long as the contact has not been broken – a basic function of a healthy organism. Most words of our language get their meanings primarily not from an intellectual consensus but rather from immediate contact. A child learns the meaning of the word “bitter” by hearing the word and associating it with the relevant facial expression. It is experienced through contact and understood intuitively. So the world of contact precedes the intellectual world. When the contact is disturbed the intellectual world is also disturbed, since *it has lost its biological, emotional and energetic preconditions*. The era of traditional, natural science and the corresponding structuring of society has been an era of increased loss of contact. Full, immediate contact with the living world is severely distorted through the barriers of fear, embarrassment and revulsion – especially to areas related to the excretory functions and sexuality. Truth is realised through overcoming such ingrained barriers. Life research implies working on taboos, for hidden knowledge manifests in the act of crossing such boundaries. The terms ecstasy, excess, and transcendence signify this element in their original meaning. Surrender would be a word for the according way of living.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL WONDERLAND OF THE LIVING

What is nature and what is life?

If I observe – in full consciousness – the shoot of a plant emerging through the earth in a flower pot, then at once I am faced with the entire enigma. Who am I, who is observing and

* Editor's note, please be aware: The statements on all projects are related to the time thirty years ago (1979), when this book was written, and do not contain any judgement about their later development.

thinking? This question points to another facet of the same enigma. It is a strange characteristic of the human mind that it can overlook this ever-present mystery simply through force of habit.

Something that is outwardly so familiar to us that we scarcely notice it contains within it a world that may one day answer all our questions. It is a world of structures and functions that have grown organically, with nature allowing millions, even billions of years for its development.

We step into an organisational and technical wonderland. The form of a seashell on the shore, the static system of a hollow bone, the structure and dynamics of a vortex, an animal's sense of orientation, or the system of information exchange within a cell – all this is amazing and exceptionally interesting. Yet it all gives us insight into only the outer façade.

What kind of energy technology could appear on the horizon of a new culture if we could get an inner view of the functioning principles that govern a blade of grass as it breaks through a layer of asphalt. What possibilities would occur from the soft emergence of power if we could understand the principle of resonance that so obviously operates everywhere in the living realm? The architecture of a corn-stalk, the construction of a spider web and the grasping technology in the claws of a dormouse – these are truly miracles of stability and “efficiency”!

The technological approach to these things is fascinating, but go to the heart of the matter. Once again the human mind, asking for measurements, proportions and chemical composition in order to reconstruct things, bypasses the essence of things, namely that these works of wonder did not arise as the means to an end, but rather as the result of a life activity on the part of the living being concerned. Behind all the biological perfection there lies a certain state of being in the Living, a constant feedback and attunement with the structures of

the universe and surrounding nature. The biological message that lies here extends far beyond the technological one; it is eminently existential in nature. The observable structures and functions are the empirical manifestations of a mystery. This mystery lies in the way of life and the universal “method of existence” of the Living.

THE HUMAN IN THE ENTIRE ORGANISM OF NATURE

Every living entity has an outer and inner aspect. What is within is, no matter how rudimentary, of a psychic nature. The psychosphere is part of the biosphere. The processes of life are directed from within. Evolution was certainly also a game of chance, but it would never have come about if there were not, in the essence of every living being, a germinating centre that could choose and grasp the results of chance.

That life actually has an inner aspect is beyond all doubt since evolution has produced a being that is capable of looking within – the human being. In the entire organism of nature the human is the eye with which life sees itself. When he looks within, he is an authentic witness to the inner aspect of life. What he sees and experiences within is the most immediate form of life in its fullness (though it is often contorted and repressed). The inner impetus of the evolution of life, going from one form of life to the next, producing the whole spectrum of animalistic instincts and drives, reveals itself in the as yet most developed form, in humans – as desire, longing, will, emotion, and “soul”. This constitutes the inner continuity in the evolution of the living world. A science of biology that continues to concentrate on only the outer forms, without expanding its possibilities to experience the inner aspect, no longer has any historical meaning. The same is true for medicine and architecture. Life does not let itself be divided. The Living that operates and perceives, questions and researches in the human, belongs together with the Living that moves plants and animals from within.

All these interconnections have methodological consequences. Since all that lives has an inner aspect, the new science will be dependent upon the power of recognition through *intuition*. This does not mean that the objectifying and analysing power of intellectual thought is discarded. The battle between the two is an antiquated episode in the bizarre and confusing human history of ideas.

Perceiving and experiencing life is largely a question of capability for inner experience. The meandering flow of a river, the singing of a bird, and the survival of a deer in the most severe winter can somehow be described and explained in terms of their physical aspects, but they can only be truly understood from within. However, the capability for inner experience is to a large extent blocked in our culture. The barriers consist of the obstacles that, in the name of morals, human dignity, and a misconceived notion of humaneness, have been created against the “animal in man”. Many elementary biological, vegetative, and animalistic zones of experience are therefore unreachable by our human consciousness. Most grown-ups can no longer cry fully, be fully enraged, love fully, relax fully, or breathe fully. Through this something has been lost in the human substance, in his direct experiential world that is necessary for a true connection and union with the Living. The human has disconnected himself, through false programming, from elementary life energies and life processes and has ideologically supported this separation from its own source by creating the concept of “objective science”. This objective science has observed and analysed only the outer aspect of the world. The deeper reason for this in no way lies in the essence of science, but in the *way of living* of the scientists and the culture they belong to. They have observed the world externally *because they truly stand outside of it*. The old magical and mystical connectedness with nature and cosmos was gone. Further

barriers to communication and emotional blocks have closed off the processes of open communication and flow between Human and World. In this way objective science has become the hallmark of disconnected humans and their era.

FUNCTIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE LIVING

a) Unintentional and Effortless

A dog that has lost his master when out walking in an unknown forest has no intent or plan for getting back home. It follows its instincts at each moment. With open senses, sniffing at and urinating on the curiosities along its path, it goes its wandering way and presently arrives back home well before its worried master.

Not only the dog, but every living being, all life processes in plants and animals, and all systems in nature function without effort and without intent. Even the most powerful movements of a panther happen without effort. That is the secret of their power and beauty. The Zen culture of the East follows the same principles in the art of archery and swordsmanship (of the Samurai type): the highest beauty and perfection without intent or exertion. It is the principle of the Centre (“Hara”). One who is at rest in his centre has cosmic powers at his disposal – like a blade of grass, a tree, or an animal. The artistry of life, when it is not disrupted, is that this calm is not lost, even in movement.

* The anthroposophical concepts of thought and of the idea constitute an important part of a tradition in the history of ideas that until today has received little attention and been poorly understood. Plato’s “Idea” or Goethe’s “observing power of judgement” (anschauende Urteilskraft) are also a part of this tradition. Here realisations and discoveries have been made concerning the nature of perception, realisations that are of existential importance and in that sense follow the ideas of Teilhard de Chardin, who saw the development of an increasing cognitive ability at the heart of evolution.

The capacity for having an intention and pursuing a goal is a relatively recent development in evolution that has only found its original expression since the emergence of the human. This capacity is a result of evolution; it has thus been added to the abilities and potency of the Living. We should not, therefore, try to establish a way of living without goal and intent, mimicking a lack of will. The goals we set will only be meaningful in terms of a life-oriented culture if we see and understand a way of existing without intent and effort as a universal principle of the living world. We must – in the sense of humane progress – again become capable of participating in this mode of being.

b) Pulsation and Peristalsis

In a true orgasm the human is like a convulsing mass of plasma. This “undignified” fact constitutes one of the deeper reasons why sexuality became taboo. The opposite should really have occurred. The fact that in the orgasmic convulsion we are dealing with a primary biological function of great importance that the human has in common with all living beings, down to the jellyfish and the amoeba should be reason enough to retain and protect this function at all cost. Whenever a living being moves independently, without being subjected to outer interference, one of the principles according to which it moves is that of pulsation: a rhythmic sequence of expansion and contraction, charge and discharge, tension and release. The organs of our autonomic system, such as the heart, lungs and stomach still show a fairly pure form of this rhythm (not superimposed by other rhythms). Worms move in this peristaltic way. Pulsation and peristalsis express a basic functional principle of the Living.

Modern man, due to his urge-adverse cultural tradition in a psychic and bioenergetic overall structure (body-armour),

has largely lost contact with his own elementary biological functions. But if this body-armouring is dissolved (through a strong emotional experience or body therapy), the body immediately surrenders to these long suppressed basic functions. Convulsions tend to develop automatically, centred in the stomach area – convulsions that soon envelop the whole organism. This process is often accompanied by screams, sobs, and a liberating cry. The human is again at one with himself, with his basic biological processes, and thereby automatically also with his soul identity.

It was foremost through the research of Wilhelm Reich that these simple truths were brought to light and placed in the context they belong, of a fundamentally new sexual and emotional order of human culture. The full energetic sexual orgasm is a key function of life. One can only imagine how far-reaching and deep a change of attitude and perspective must be achieved today before the simplest interconnections in life can be seen again. Life research contains enough implications for cognitive theory to confound the representatives of classical science. For example, there is a strong correlation between the ability to research life and the ability to achieve orgasmic convulsions, sexual surrender, and general life potency.

c) The Contradictory

To justify its name, life research needs a new way of thinking. The concept of a “life-oriented” culture should not be misunderstood as a mechanical copying of the laws of life. The patterns and processes of the living world can neither be understood nor applied in a mechanistic fashion because of the complex and contradictory nature of the living world. There is a phenomenon known in therapeutic body work that can be verified by trying it on oneself. Pressure on a sensitive part of the skin causes discomfort, but a small change in one’s inner attitude can trigger pleasure. These things are ambivalent.

Even a small change in mood or perspective, an unnoticeable crossing of an invisible boundary, causes a phenomenon to be appear as its opposite. Definitive statements such as “like this and only like this” or “either-or” become inapplicable when dealing with the living world. Nature never follows a straight line. The deeper we delve into the living world the more we discover the intimate belonging of every truth to a counter-truth, every principle to a counter-principle, every thesis to an antithesis. Life seems to work in a fundamentally antithetical and polar manner. This universal duality and ambivalence of the living world also runs through the deeper levels of human consciousness surfacing, for example, in the “double meanings of primal words” or in the “twin faces of archetypes”. This phenomenon has been well documented by depth psychology and by the study of mythology. The difficulty in understanding and conceptually grasping the Living arises, among other things, because the two opposites form a functional unity. Examples of this unity are:

Construction – Destruction

Law – Spontaneity

Order – Chaos

Complexity – Simplicity

Tension – Relaxation

Flowing – Forming

Movement – Stillness, and so on.

Growth is flow *and* form. Creation is freedom *and* necessity. Freedom is spontaneity *and* regularity. Development is motion *and* stillness. Evolution is determination and (growing) freedom from determination. To every cardinal thesis there is a cardinal antithesis. Only both together yield the truth about the mysterious process we call life. Compare that to the whole register of dogmas entailed in our morals and values and the common mode of judgement! Would it not be worthwhile to

think analogously and apply this *phenomenon of paradox* to human and social life? The individual's development results from an inward centring combined with an outward expansion, contraction of the "I" and "dissolving" of the "I". A living community incorporates both spontaneity and organisation, organic growth and design, centralisation and decentralisation, hierarchy and democracy. Both the ecological outer space and spiritual inner space of a community need to be cultivated. It is desirable to be grounded in the reality of daily life and in the growing certainty of the transcendental world. (The issue of antithesis is raised and discussed further in the post-script concerning tradition.)

d) *The Open*

All life is open: it is in a constant communication and in a constant state of becoming. Every living being, every biological unit (for example a biotope), is in terms of modern biology, an "open system". This biological openness of a system has two aspects: there is not only the kind of balanced flux where the system is in a constant circuit of exchange with its surroundings. Another aspect is involved, the aspect that the French researcher Edgar Morin, known for his attempt to create a more deeply rooted biology, alluded to at the end of his book *Le paradigme perdu: la nature humaine* ("The Lost Paradigm: Human Nature"):

"One becomes stronger when one forever wrenches loose from the magic word that explains everything, from the litany that supposedly solves everything. And one gets stronger if one sees the world, life, humans, knowledge, and action as open systems. The opening – a breach into the unknown and

* The German noun Geist and its adjective geistig may be roughly translated as "mind-spirit" and "mental-spiritual". See the Translator's Note for further clarification.

into nothingness – is at the same time the thirsty and hungry mouth through which our spirit and our life desire to breathe, drink, eat and unite in love.”

The biological quality of openness has something to do with the basic fact that every living thing is in a process of development, and this development obviously has an “inner” aspect, a directing, invisible potency – we speak today of “self-organisation” – that seeks to enlarge the scope for spontaneity, freedom and openness in the course of evolution (Teilhard de Chardin based his theory of evolution upon this).

No matter how we wish to interpret the openness of biological systems, it sets standards for building culture and society on the laws of life. One of the most important qualities of a living cultural concept is openness to change, self-correction, and development. The translation of the principles of “open systems” to human reality, as Popper’s Critical Rationalism for Science and Bloch’s *Experimentum Mundi* aspired to do – not just proclaiming them but actually overcoming all rigid ideological, institutional, and habitual structures – is today a prerequisite for any creative cultural concept. Humaneness is active tolerance for the contradictory and the open.

e) The Inexact and the Circling

Our eyes often achieve the most accurate relationship to an object by casually glancing past it. A blind person reads Braille by circling the letters with his fingertips. Truths often sink in more effectively by only being hinted at. Dogs get acquainted by circling each other. No two leaves are identical. Biological information is transmitted by “static noise”. A stream does not flow in a straight line but in meanders. The shortest path is a detour, says a Chinese proverb. Life often achieves incredible precision, such as when bees build honeycombs, animals orient themselves, and cells transmit information to other cells. But this precision is achieved through the “imprecise”

methods of circling, touching, oscillating. *Precision lies not in aiming, but in contact and the continuous feedback of the signals sent out.* Once again it is more a particular mode of being than a technical method that makes the function possible. It is similar to trance states where one remembers things that could never be recollected through conscious effort.

A NEW MENTAL-SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE

If I wish to experience the fragrance of a flower I smell it intently but very lightly. The method used depends on the type of smell involved and the way the sense organs function. Life research is also of this nature. We are, with regards to science, in the transitory phase of a fundamental paradigm shift, and this means a change in the mode of experience. In order to study nature in a meaningful way we must acquire a different overall outlook that will itself unfold the new questions, methods and concepts for the work that is to be done. For life research we need a comprehensive philosophy of the living world before we can devote ourselves to a meaningful kind of analysis and judgement. The manifestations of the Living are too diverse to be sought and grasped without a tactical scheme. But at the same time they are too profound, paradoxical, dialectic, and holistic in their functioning to be understood within the model of traditional biology. Life research encompasses, among other areas, biology, ecology, bioenergetics, psychosomatics, and depth psychology, uniting them in the framework of a universal biophilosophy. The emerging methodology is no longer of the hard scholastic and definitive kind, as is modern science, but softer, more open, and flowing. The phenomena of paradox and system openness, as well as our inferior standard of knowledge in life research, compel us to take an intellectual attitude that fundamentally affirms doubt through its ability to remain in tense suspension

between two opposites without immediately needing to resolve the issue (in order to attain a psychic relief). Ultimately, difficulties are overcome through ease.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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LITERATURE

The titles listed below are only those closely related to the development of a new cultural idea as outlined in this book. They have been selected because of their basic impulse, their originality and their overall message, rather than due to any close agreement with the details.

Georges Bataille: *The Tears of Eros*

Ernest Callenbach: *Ecotopia*

Friedrich Nietzsche: *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Wilhelm Reich: *Character Analysis*

Wilhelm Reich: *The Function of the Orgasm*

Teilhard de Chardin: *Man and Cosmos*

only in German:

Dieter Duhm: *Der Mensch ist anders*

Dieter Duhm: *Synthese der Wissenschaft*

Hugo Kükelhaus: *Unmenschliche Architektur*

Hugo Kükelhaus: *Fassen, Fühlen, Bilden*

VERLAG MEIGA: BOOKS IN ENGLISH

Leila Dregger: *Tamera – A Model for the Future*

Dieter Duhm: *The Sacred Matrix. From the Matrix of Violence to the Matrix of Life. The Foundation for a New Civilisation*

Dieter Duhm: *Future without War. Theory of Global Healing*

Dieter Duhm: *Eros Unredeemed. The World Power of Sexuality*

Madjana Geusen (Ed.): *Man's Holy Grail is Woman. Paintings, drawings and texts by Dieter Duhm*

Sabine Lichtenfels: *Temple of Love. A Journey into the Age of Sensual Fulfillment*

Sabine Lichtenfels: *GRACE – Pilgrimage for a Future without War*

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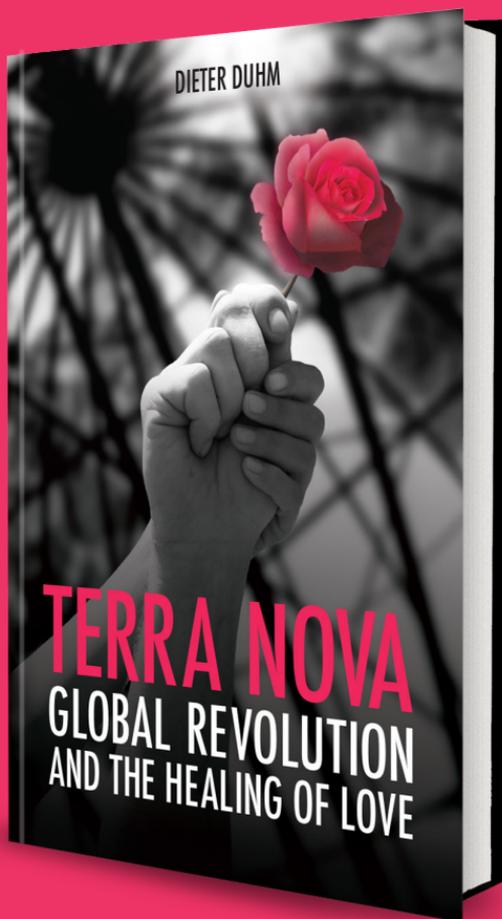
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