

DIETER DUHM

TOWARDS A NEW CULTURE

FROM REFUSAL TO RE-CREATION

OUTLINE OF AN ECOLOGICAL
AND HUMANE ALTERNATIVE

V - POSTSCRIPT

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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CONCERNING TRADITION

We are attempting something radical. It is aimed at what may be the deepest possible reversal of the values of the historical past. Once again human life would begin a new history. But the careful reader will realise how much history, how much conscious integration of tradition, and how much “conservative” will be present in our radical attempt. Since this is a radical cultural concept, that is, one that goes to the roots, we touch upon the most distinguished teachings of the past, even where we are diametrically opposed to them. Here, as everywhere, the “paradox” of life is confirmed. It may seem like a paradox to some that a project so close to the ideas of Wilhelm Reich can simultaneously quote with joy the words of the Jesuit father Teilhard de Chardin. This original mind, whose radicalism proved itself as much in his personal as in his scientific approach to the philosophy of evolution, calls the unspeakable apostle Paul a holy man. Paul and Augustine together are the philosophical source of the appalling form of Christianity that sees its mission as the fight of spirit against the desires of the flesh and in making the authority of the church absolute. Thus they both contributed decisively to the human catastrophe of the Christian West. They belong to that part of humanity who have decisively and deeply influenced the value judgements of our entire culture. We are formulating the most radical counter-position possible today – after Marx, Freud, and Reich. We must take care to not simply negate the old; it is much too *true* for that. Augustine was no weakling, nor was he a fanatic who spoke out of personal need or resentment. He possessed what the material-sensual world had to offer and yet he gave it up. Why? Because he was moved by a truth that is as deep as ours: the truth of “God”, the truth of

a religious love that is entirely freed from and cleansed of the flesh. This truth is enormous. If it were not, the belief that the body is a prison for the soul could never have held sway in the history of religion. Plato's eudaemonism (highest bliss), which also calls for separation from the body, and the flagellantism of the Middle Ages have the same origin, and that is the deep human experience that the body is a prison. This experience is spiritual in nature and therefore, in principle, lies outside the area of classical psychological explanations and theories. A truly relevant spiritual approach would find that the body is in fact a prison for the soul. As Rudolf Steiner said, many illnesses occur because "the soul is too closely bound to the body". The materialistic consciousness that reduces mental and emotional processes to bodily ones therefore causes a disposition towards illness that in the end can only be overcome through a new medicine and life practice that is religiously oriented. A cultural renewal based only on what is sensual and vital would once again miss the essence unless the functioning of the sensual and vital aspects of life were understood fully. They can only burst into bloom when we reach a certain level of "de-materialising", spiritualising, and releasing of the body from its inertia. The body will only become a full medium for sensuality and self-realisation when the mind is no longer fixated exclusively on this body and its needs. Mastery of the mind over the body remains valid though seen in a different light. Mastery no longer means suppression and mortification.

When today we dare to seek an existential orientation and to live according to it, we do not draw a line between thinkers who are close to our philosophy (verbally), and those who are far from it. The ideological battles that result from such superficial comparisons are meaningless when it comes to making basic decisions of a personal nature. The determining factor is the "break-in of the existential" into people's lives and the power of their ensuing inner revolutions. Those were the

“originally shaken” (Karl Jaspers) – people such as Augustine, François Villon, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Teilhard de Chardin, Wilhem Reich and Otto Mühl have something to say to us, even if their truths must first be uncovered and seen outside the context of their specific historical form. Their lives and the nature of their work are virtually proof enough for us to take seriously that which moved them. Paul would not have been able to race through half the world if his idea of salvation had only grown out of his “personal issues” (such as the projections of an urge-adverse and pent-up soul).

The truth we are dealing with is never a finished product; it remains in constant historical development. Its aspects are as multifaceted and contradictory as the twists and turns in the history of ideas. Next to Nietzsche’s philosophy of the will to gain power stands, equally valid and necessary, the Sermon on the Mount; next to the adoration of sensual beauty we have as equally relevant the ideal of chastity and asceticism, next to Marx’s materialism, we have, of equal importance, Plato’s “Idea”; next to Reich’s sexual economy there is Buddha’s concept of Nirvana; and alongside the modern idea of self-realisation, we have the equally profound Augustinian or Jesuit ideas of obedience. Again I repeat: we must meet these ideas – which in their verbalised forms often appear contradictory – in their essence, in what is truly meant, in order to be able to assimilate them. Take for example the religious idea of obedience to God and Church. Its essence is in the becoming capable of devotion, of giving oneself completely. For the human to be able to receive the holy spirit and thereby partake of love, a disposition must be created in him that makes him open to this receiving; and that takes the form of unquestioned obedience. (That the call for absolute obedience towards the Church was also motivated by reasons of power, as described for example in Dostoevsky’s *The Grand Inquisitor*, is not denied at all. Whenever the authority of those who had the origi-

nal experience was no longer effective, the process of perversion started.)

The ordained forms of asceticism, chastity, and obedience can only be convincingly surmounted and replaced by more humane forms when we understand their existential meaning and their spiritual depth. The same is true for the forms of marriage and family. They were all historically productive at one time, in that they addressed and developed an essential aspect of the human soul. We can only truly overcome them by understanding and preserving their true nature (this was the meaning of Hegel's term "sublation").

We have found the functional principle of opposites to be a basic characteristic of the living world. This "paradox phenomenon" sharpens our senses for the contradictions in history and in our own development. The structure and dynamics of our own situation is full of contradictoriness; because the impulses that life sends out in the form of our drives, needs, and consciousness are contradictory. Therefore we need to guard ourselves against hasty judgements and the one-sided choices of our philosophical reference points. The mental-spiritual physiognomy of what is deep and genuine is not bound to just one time, one generation, one ideology, one movement, or one assertion. Whatever is most profoundly contrary to our convictions may sometimes lie very close to us – for example Plato's theory of ideas, removed as it is from any life practice; the life-negating mysticism of the East; the idea of asceticism; the concepts of sin, grace, and forgiveness; the idea of marital faithfulness and devotion unto death; the idea of making sacrifices and giving up the self. For the living dialectic of opposites creates inner points of contact in places where the superficial eye sees only contradictions.

We formulate our radical thesis not outside our cultural era, but consciously within the deeper lines of development that we recognise behind the obscurity and perversion of our cul-

tural tradition. The truths that are hidden in the old forms of religion, philosophy, science, art, love and social order shall be freed from these forms so that we may become capable of re-experiencing and developing them at a new level of consciousness.

Life has encoded its truths on the great stage of history and the history of ideas. Its cast of characters include Dionysus and Jesus Christ, Napoleon and Elsa Brandstrom, Francis of Assisi and Nietzsche, Rudolf Steiner and Wilhelm Reich (that hardly any women are included is due partly to the peculiarities of male historiography). The originality and authority (*auctoritas*) of the living world incarnated here can be seen in these people's actions, in the passion and authenticity in their work and style. Style, seen as the statement of something from within, is not a question of technique but of originality and proximity to the issue. Anyone unfamiliar with Nietzsche or Teilhard de Chardin would be taken aback by their styles – if he is sensitive to them. Whenever a distinct and great style emerged in the epochs of art history – the Antique, Romantic, Gothic, Renaissance, etc. – we can assume that it coincided with an inner attitude towards life relating to an essential mode of experiencing life. This of course applies to stringent moral codes. Morals have not *only* imprisoned the human animal in a self-imposed corset but also and perhaps mainly are an historical impulse towards self-assessment and self-education. In that sense they are a true humanising medium. That moral codes as a rule achieved the opposite is an indication not of the poverty of their motivation but of their inadequacy. Are

* 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.

not our own endeavours somehow of a deeply moral nature?

History has been a battle between the principle of love and the principle of fear. The original and authentic cultural creations have always been the attempt of humans to assert themselves in this battle. In figures with the highest level of consciousness in the history of morals and religion, the battle was fought for the principle of love. The modern form that this battle has taken – expressed most clearly by Wilhelm Reich – is based on a more precise form of analysis and self-observation, rather than on seeking a final solution. By using Reich's results we hope to avoid past mistakes in our current attempt, but they cannot protect us from making new ones. But perhaps, beyond the search that is unrewarded and stumbles into new mistakes, a new discovery can suddenly be made. Philosophical thoughts about liberation are powerless if they do not promote development in which an inner leap can take place that leads to lasting new experiences. We can construct a suitable vessel, but we can only hope that it will be filled. We want to build the most realistic basis we possibly can for the “principle of hope”. Ernst Bloch has vividly demonstrated in his voluminous work that there is incredible material from the history of ideas that we may understand, transform, and assimilate. This way of studying history is for us a never-ending source of discovery and self-recognition for it is identical with our own process of becoming. The “psychic structure” that we have deep within us is – when seen as the precipitation of human experience – sedimented history. Self-affirmation at this level of consciousness is therefore also the acceptance of the tradition from which we come.

THAT ALL THIS DOES NOT REMAIN MERE WORDS ...

One reason for publishing this book is our hope of expan-

ding a cultural project that has been in preparation in Germany since 1978. The project bears the temporary name “*Bauhütte* – Workshop for Life Research and New Culture”. It was started by some men and women who for this purpose gave up their previous professions and put their savings into the realisation of the project. The goal is to build an exemplary settlement where the cultural concept outlined in this book is realised as a model. In order for a community of 100 to 200 people to function there must be not only a concept for the psychological and social aspects of living together, but also functioning concepts in energy, food production, and health. Also needed is an architectural concept that corresponds to the social concept, a sensible solution to the problems of solid waste and waste water, a system of pedagogy and education that reflects the contents of the new culture, and a system of its own for research and study. As much as possible model solutions in all these areas are being sought for the settlement, solutions that may come to be important examples for a future ecological culture and way of living. The new culture grows out of positive examples, and the existence of an ecological settlement with a functioning community and functioning technologies would definitely be such an example.

The co-workers of the *Bauhütte* project have developed a differentiated concept for the areas of energy, agriculture, and waste recycling that attempts to combine the practical needs of the community with the intention of creating a model. Questions have arisen that cannot be answered now, nor in the foreseeable future. Technical experiments are being conducted that will bring more insight. For anyone who gets joy from such practical research there is a wealth of research fields open for creative pioneering work. Many of these fields have lain fallow for lack of individuals who could cultivate them. The fields being actively pursued are: energy research, labora-

tory research for the study of biological energies and biological microstructures, research in recycling with an integrated combination of elements (a functioning plant has been built for producing biogas and algae, integrated with aquaculture and fish raising), air and water purification techniques developed by the physicist Ronge, and initial experiments are in process for building with new forms and materials. In addition, a special kind of “therapy research” has been carried out over the last few years to facilitate the dissolution of the character and body armouring. With this type of research at its base, a small medical centre will be established, for which we are urgently seeking dedicated doctors. These are some keywords for interested people. Those who want to know more details may refer to the brochure describing the entire project. Some *Bauhütte* co-workers are working on a very extensive basic research project that we call “life research”. It is divided into philosophical research (addressing such concepts as biological “self-organisation”, “information”, “entelechy”, etc.), scientific research (for the study of biological structures, forms of motion, functional principles, biological principles of construction, biological energies, processes of germination and growth, principles of ecological systems, etc.) and finally a type of human research to become clearer about the meaning, goal, and possibilities of our existence.

Thus the planned settlement is to be neither a therapeutic centre nor an ecological village in the customary rustic sense, but foremost a centre for new insights, experiences, life research, cultural research, community research, environmental research, and experimental social design. The final criterion for everything, including the new technologies or the questions of economic autonomy, remains the human dynamics, the ability of the community to love, and the individual’s possibility for development. The cultural and political character of the

project means that the practical concepts that are developed go beyond the limits of usual village concepts. Taking an active role when it comes to the questions of our time is part of a creative life. Increasing publicity is resulting in a network of political, cultural, and personal contacts that facilitate the realisation of the project and that may, in the future, allow the solutions developed in the community to have some influence on society at large.

Our project is not intended to fulfil a pre-ordained program, but rather to initiate a development from a solid basis. The project will grow to the extent that contacts and relations grow among the people involved. Our chance for a political effect lies solely in achieving human understanding and resonance. For the implementation of the settlement, we neither need professionals nor academic titles (although we also have nothing against them). We need people, co-workers and friends, whose joy it is to risk something unusual while using their intelligence. The more of them the better.

* 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.

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*

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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*

Sabine Lichtenfels: *Sources of Love and Peace. Morning Prayers*

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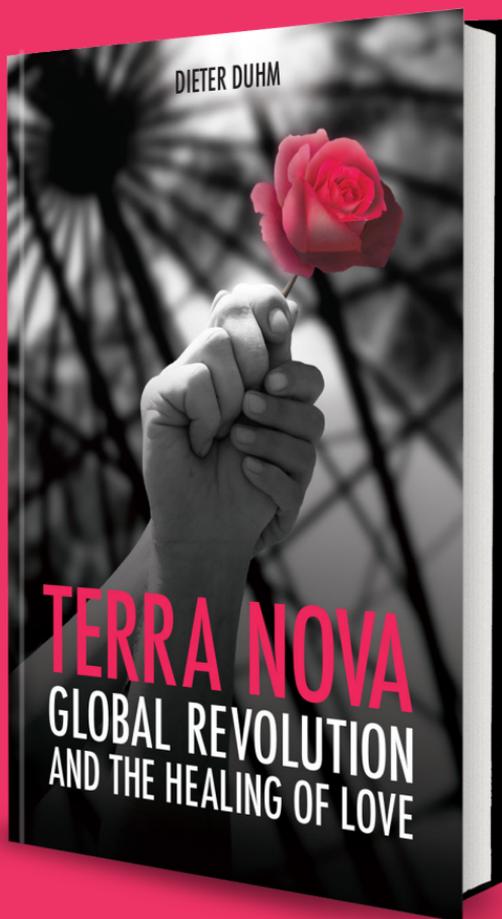
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