



FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

REPORT FROM THE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE AT THE GOETHEANUM



DAS GOETHEANUM

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CULTIVATING THE NEW WORLD

Editorial

The new World: It was born in 1989 when the ideologies of black and white, east and west and friend or foe gave way to realism, when the age of the internet began and when knowledge became less important than connectedness.

The new World: It continuously asks how can we go on in all areas. There is no point in pondering upon the fact that at the threshold of the century two dates are mirrored, 1989 and 2011, because we are not mere observers but we have to go with the current and contribute to the direction it takes. Much has been done with this in mind within biodynamic agriculture over the past years. The series of annual themes from «Dialogue and Identity» to the cosmological and spiritual aspects of anthroposophical agriculture, from the spiritual good of this earthly service to the Christian-Occidental culture and Rudolf Steiner's agricultural course has now been concluded. Therefore the carriers, Nikolai Fuchs in charge as Section Leader and Jean-Michel Florin, Ueli Hurter and Thomas Lüthi as the new team, have decided to «turn the Conference over» just like a field is being turned over to enhance fertility. Not ideas which stand as guide lines but working together in a way that inspires an inner fervour is to be at the centre of biodynamic meetings.

There are laboratories of the future where every participant helps to find a path from the past to the future. What approaches from the future? How can I connect to it? Listening in discussion groups, in dialogues, in quiet moments. In a series of new discussion and working groups it was attempted to bring the experiences of each and every one into the process through dialogue. The result was threefold: Future projects for ones own biography – future pro-

jects for the farm, i.e. the bio-dynamic work and future projects for the wider movement. Guided by Nicanor Perlas and Claus-Otto Scharmer as moderator, this conference opened out. Some discussions between the 600 participants were chaired by students and trainees; a picture that brings something of the future.

Such a situation is less based on experience but more promising. It reminds of St. Augustine who said that there are three instances of presence. The presence of the past, when habits and memories determine the now. Then there is the presence of the now where one can loose oneself in activity, happiness or enthusiasm and the presence of the future, where desires and dreams are present in visions and plans. This third, maybe most interesting presence, was the theme of the Annual Conference of the Section for Agriculture. In a time when every aspect of life is subject to change and calls for a look at ones own personality, those responsible for the Section for Agriculture have taken the bull by the horns. In the same year as Rudolf Steiner's 150th anniversary is being celebrated in many places, they draw attention to this future as community of the bio-dynamic movement.

The presence of the future is an important aspect for all areas of anthroposophical activity. Therefore I am delighted that the series in the «Goetheanum» which in each issue applies to one of the Sections, is starting in this issue with the Section for Agriculture and at the same time introduces the «Goetheanum» in its new layout. As with every crop additional «cuts» may be necessary. Thus, with your help dear readers, the appearance of the «Goetheanum» will see ongoing improvements over the coming months. I thank Philipp Tok for the new layout.

UELI HURTER

WE ARE ALL ACTIVISTS

Opening Address

I have the great pleasure to open the Agriculture Conference. As every year we have come here from nearby, far and very far in order to meet for a few days and to share fortune and misfortune, development and stagnation, sunshine and storms of the past year and to talk about aspirations for the forthcoming years.

This agriculture conference is a celebration because we are relaxed having escaped the agricultural daily life. May this relaxed mood turn into an elated mood because it is characteristic for the coming days that we look at our ideas and ideals and that we create a space for the basic mood and feelings about our work and that together we can strengthen our impulses and initiatives. That we can enliven our worldwide bio-dynamic movement and give it a future, that is why we meet here. Every conference has a programme; but when you look at the programme of this conference you will be surprised because there isn't much to see. Hardly any titles and few speakers. Luckily there are breaks, they are familiar. This conference in 2011 is a workshop, a workshop for the future and we all are the activists. The themes are made up from what each one has brought and beacons of light will appear as the days progress. Agricultural workshop for the future, from burning issues to beacons of light, that is our mutual goal for the forthcoming days. This title suggests that this conference opening requires other openings. First of all an opening of ourselves. My every-day I which drifts on the high seas of time, where long past and far future collide, will not get us to the lighthouse. Here an opening up is required. The I is being turned inwards cosmically enlarged. It grows into an inner sphere which is also I.

Then the opening of our farms, establishments and trading places



towards the global world. We will remain loyal to the few acres which we own and which demand so much of us but at the same time we must not turn away from the burning questions of our time. That means that our local actions have to be supported by cosmopolitan engagement. We are all activists, the workshop is ready, the tools have been provided and two workshop leaders take us by the hand on our new path from burning issues to beacons of light: Nicanor Perlas and Claus-Otto Scharmer. Thank you very much for your courage.

The path from burning issues to beacons of light is like the letter U. We are undergoing a U-process. Claus-Otto Scharmer made this discovery, researched it and put it together into a practical tool. Where are we? What are the reasons behind our burning issues? What approaches us from the future? How is it shaped? Can we bring what is new as a prototype to the world? These are the five steps facing us. We are starting the conference with contributions which are taking us from the past to our future capabilities. The days are based on the study of the Leading Thought: «What is the earth in reality within the Macrocosm?» and artistic activities which will take us into the night.

To feel and form seed forces for the future is the opening into the future which will make the conference into a market place of ideas. Much work has to be done until then—let's start.

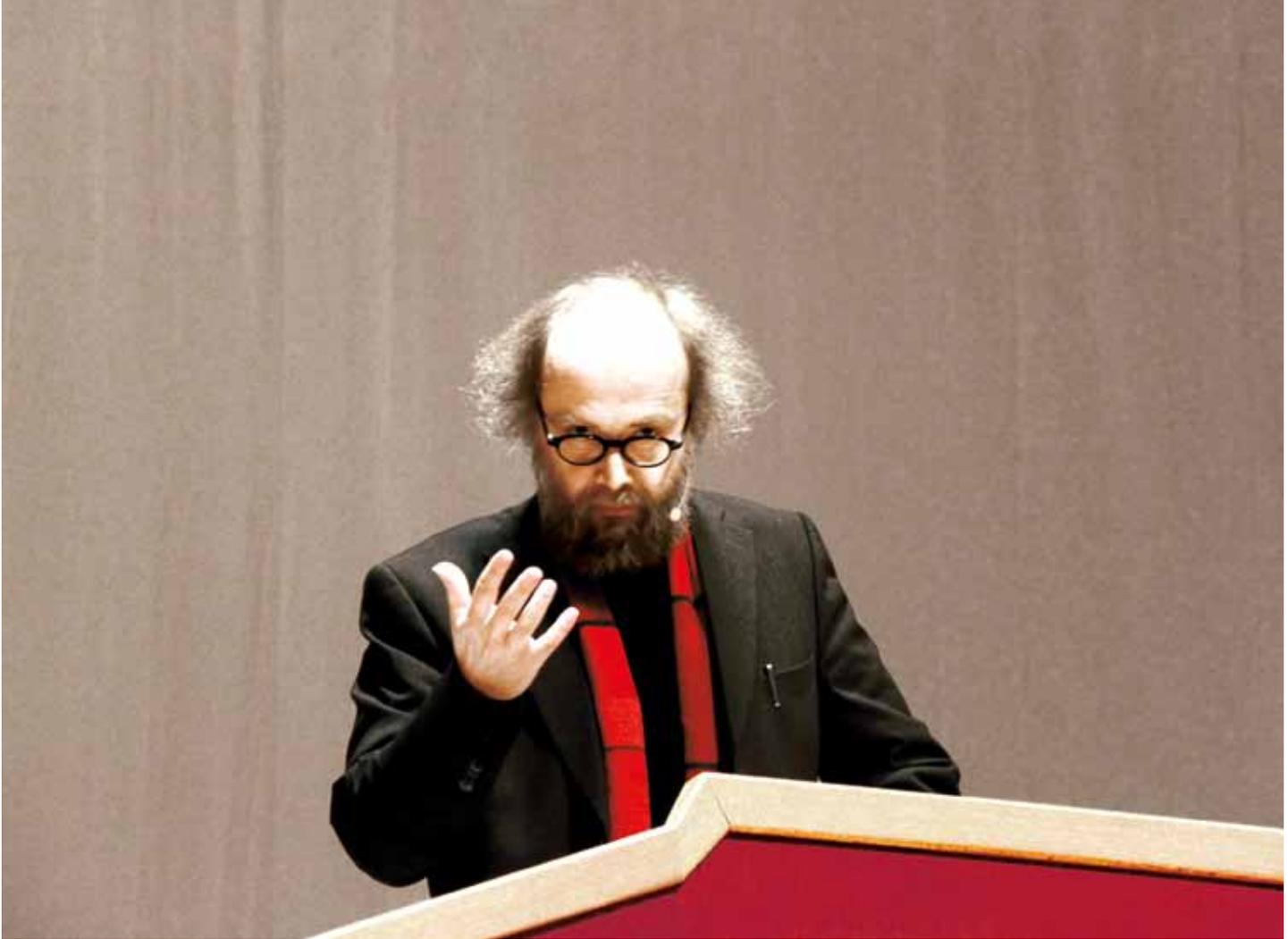
Ueli Hurter is a farmer and is responsible for the Agriculture Section together with Jean-Michel Florin and Thomas Lüthi. He is part of the management team of L'Aubier, a Demeter-farm, Eco-Hotel and Bio-Restaurant. 1997-2010 he was President of the Swiss Demeter Association.

TEMPORARY COMBINE HARVESTERS

Philosophical Prelude

A laboratory of the future for farmers is a culture workshop. Culture originally meant to cultivate the ground. Thus cultural workers are nurturers of the ground, they are ground men and women. I am therefore delighted that the impulse to work with thinkers like Claus-Otto Scharmer and Nicanor Perlas comes from the Agriculture Section. I want to formulate my address as a small philosophical meditation. The only non-philosophical aspect of it is the lack of time. And this brings us straight to the theme! What do we understand by future? For us the future is an empty space which we fill up with responsibilities and appointments. You can check that with your own agenda which is most likely not to include living or thinking but which is cluttered with appointments. For us future means that which <has not been done yet>, a mere quota. Even development becomes training which we undergo. Spare time becomes free time which we have to fill. Even life itself is being dealt with until we die. We have to remind ourselves of the lack of development this future provides. In a

certain sense we are like worms who eat themselves into the future and continuously transform <agenda> into <ad acta>. **We are temporary combine harvesters which continuously make appointments leaving them in bulk behind us.** To this future which hasn't passed yet applies the Latin: Futurum. Futurum-re relates to what will be but what will be is also what will have been. This leads to the past perfect, i.e. past as what has been. <Ad acta>, done-perfect. A completely different expression for future is Adventus, a translation of the Latin: <advenire>, which means <to come>. Adventus is a future which is not apparent in the present but a future which wants to come into the present. And only this coming -into- the present leads to new creative impulses in evolution. Impulses which can't be anticipated but which are regenerative. Adventus is in a certain sense a solar, illuminated future pointing to itself. In contrast, the Futurum-Future is lunar, a moon reflectance of what I already know today.



The Adventus-Future reflects the «Imperfect», i.e. the past not as «ad acta» but as presence of the past. I would like to invite you to an adventological change of our self and world consciousness. We have indeed many futurologists and few adventologists. But if we ignore the Adventus-future we are inclined to make the future into a simple extension of the past. Then we implant a certain contraception into our thinking. Then we really do no longer expect anything new. Our curiosity too leads to nothing new. Accordingly we don't really meet other people, we only ever have something to do with them. Waldorf Pedagogy for me is a radical Adventus-Pedagogy. It looks at man adventically, it doesn't want to intervene in the future. We can miss the Adventus-Future or we can wake up to it. There is an expression which I want to declare as an expression of love each day. It is «wahrnehmen» (to take as true). «wahr» in «wahrnehmen» goes back to the Old German word «wara», «care, careful». A «Wahrzeichen» is a sign of taking care, paying attention. This relates to what Claus-Otto

Scharmer refers to in the three development processes. How can we become more careful in our thinking, feeling and willing? The ability to perceive in itself is neither thinking, feeling nor willing. It is an ego force which penetrates these three.

I conclude with a sentence from Rudolf Steiner: «One can only be effective in life if one allows oneself to be effected by life». Dear people, we can only live our future, our Futurum-Future fruitful, if we awaken for an Adventus-Future.

R. Steiner: Lecture at the fourth members' meeting of the Waldorf School Association. 1 June 1924. GA 298 [1958], page 187. Stefan Brotbeck is a freelance philosopher. He writes, teaches and advises on philosophical and anthroposophical questions. At present he is setting up a teaching and culture forum in Basel; s «Philosophicum».

LIKE A SPRING OF THE WILL

TALKING ABOUT THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE

On the first afternoon of the conference eight participants faced the other 600. In soft lighting they began to read out quotations. Moving words from interviews and discussions which had taken place worldwide with people in the vicinity of biodynamic farms. A stream of commitment, concerns, despair and hope regarding the massive task of starting and making a head-way fell over those that had made the journey. 75 choices formed the basis for the conference. Wolfgang Held spoke to Ilsabé Zucker who is part of the team involved in the preparations.

How did the thorough preparations start? We spoke to Claus-Otto Scharmer about the burning issues in agriculture as we saw them. He listened interested and said: Now go and ask the people whether they feel the same. This was a new area for us and therefore we were surprised by his reaction. He recommended to hold dialogue interviews and together we put together nine questions. I asked Dr. Ursula Versteegen from Hamburg, Scharmer's co-founder of the Presencing-Institute at the MIT-University in Boston, to help us. She is a master in this type of work, particularly dialogue interviews. With time it became clear that we should not only speak to farmers but also with traders, producers, customers and advisers, also in other countries, other continents, young and old people. In the end there were more than 60 talks.

How did the interviews go? It is important to find the right mood for dialogue interviews. The best way is to spend a few hours on the farm before the interview. Then one gets a feeling of how the farm is run, how the people there feel and think. Out of this emphasis one then tries to enter into a deeper level of speaking and listening. I was able to engage Angela Baldini, an expert in event management, for this project. She held 20 interviews. Silvia Zuur took on interviews in the USA. Katja Reichenbacher, farmer and economy student was interested in interviews with women. Roman Best, who has just graduated with a degree in agriculture

and Susanne Trapp, member of the farming commune Domäne Fredeburg, played an important role in these preparations. Also Jean-Michel Florin led some discussions.

Michaelmas 2010 the interviewers, Ursula Versteegen, Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Hurter met for a first evaluation of the 20 interviews in the style of a «Jam-Session». We had all familiarised ourselves with the results and shared those quotes which touched us most. The following discussion brought about a picture. We discovered that more interviews were required and decided to hold a further 40. This produced a lot of material; 350 pages of notes. In January we met for two days to evaluate the findings. We consolidated it to the point where nothing more could be left out. This produced a kind of «Script» for the Agriculture Conference. It was a difficult task to define and formulate the titles for the eight burning issues out of what we had learnt from the interviews. These titles were to be displayed on a large canvas in the Hall of the Goetheanum whilst listening to the quotes. We then had a few practice readings and discovered which choices worked and which didn't and who was to read what. **The choices were to invite the conference participants in the hall to self reflection and discernment and to turn them into true conference participants.** - an artistic process. These were stressful weeks prior to the conference. Ursula Versteegen, Angela Baldini, Susanne Trapp and I spent one or two more days on designing the 3,5 days. We had put together an itinerary script of nearly 40 pages for the laboratories. And yet the future workshops worked freely, nearly improvisatory. Without these preparations one cannot grasp the conference.

What does this high degree of attention mean – did it have an inner and outer aspect? Indeed. Of Scharmer's four stages of perception we wanted to achieve mainly the third and fourth in our discussions – the empathic and the creative listening.



These are the tasks of an inner schooling path where the most important aspect is the actual interview for which I have to tune myself like an instrument. The point was to put oneself into the shoes of the discussion partner. Those interviewed did not only speak as producers, farmers or gardeners, but as human beings, as someone who has an I, someone who has a fulfilling task. In our interview group a real process of finding the essence developed. This became more and more our task and an important basis for the laboratory moderators, Claus-Otto Scharmer and Nicanor Perlas. A «container», as Scharmer called it, was created like in Rudolf Steiner's description for anthroposophical community building, out of the soul-spiritual substance of the people involved in the preparations which make it all possible and where seeds for the future can germinate.

Where something is created pitfalls are never far – what resistance did you encounter? Well, resistance and difficulties were a plenty! Whether for the Agriculture Section or the physical well being of the team, our preparatory group or Scharmer, Perlas or Versteegen.. Especially a high degree of tolerance and acceptance was asked for. This arose out of the unusual demands and different ways of working. Not least did everyone have to get used to a completely new style of conference, to create it and then to implement it. To organise conference calls over more than one time zone: Boston, Hamburg, Dornach, Berlin, Salem and the Philippines in different languages was far simpler. For me it was sometimes difficult to get across that the interview process is a process of consolidation without which the conference would not be a success.

Is the conference the centre between preparations and review? The outcome of the conference was a profound opening of the will. What was achieved in the way of new directions and the will to change was overwhelming. I felt that a long paralysis of

the will within the biodynamic movement had been freed, like a spring of the will. It is probably a secret of the will that it is low in the forces of imagination. Unspectacular spectacular. During the review amongst the organising circle at the end of the conference Claus-Otto Scharmer emphasised how important it is to support and nurture the newly found initiative in order not to fail due to present obstacles. Hence at the end of the conference the e-mail-Address: contact@dornach2011.com was announced. Everyone who has decided to make a change can make contact. I really hope that the Agriculture Section in Dornach can offer the right support so that the will impulse which has been achieved does not subside again.

It was obvious that a new era is beginning. What are the next steps? I was delighted that the Section Leaders have decided to continue with this process in 2012 and 2013. I am looking forward to see what forms it will take. It was

important to open the senses by holding back conceptions and ways of thinking and to view the present situation with fresh senses. Allowing to involve the heart force by overcoming the voice of cynicism and inner apathy. Opening up the will forces by overcoming fear. This are three forces which are known through Rudolf Steiner's esoteric writings. Hundreds of farmers were inspired and attracted by the idea of tuning one's instruments, to open up thinking, feeling and willing so that one can become an instrument for the desired future. I hope that many people who attended the conference will apply the idea of the U-process for their process of innovation on their farms and businesses.

Ilisabé Zucker worked as gardener on the Baukhof. She is working in a medical practice in Salem/Lake Constance. She holds a masters in home economics and teaches at the Freie Landbauschule Bodensee.

BURNING QUESTIONS

LEADING VOICES

It remains uncertain what was more important, the incredible commitment of the seven interviewees who talked to farms, businesses, individuals and groups worldwide about the situation of biodynamic agriculture, about their concerns and rewards or the replies. Just as the questions had been thoroughly prepared, the answers were looked at with equal attention. Again and again choices were made and selected. This created more than one picture of today's concerns, questions and hopes for agriculture. They were composted and thus, and this was probably noted by all present, they became a soul energy, a deepened feeling of presence. Behind each of the following simple quotes stands a biography, a thought. This thus enhanced present then forms the vessel for a <Future in the making>.

We have problems here in India – a few million people died of starvation. In the future, there will be hundreds of millions affected!

We are sitting on a very dangerous time bomb, you can say. We are dealing with millions of guys running around the planet, all running for food, water ... things are not so rosy! Everyone has really to pull up their socks and start thinking on big.

Having read the World Agriculture Report one has to say: Well, here and now it is up to us all! It is high time, now! Now we have

to face up to our task. Do we continue to say that we have to defend our share of the market, or maybe this is no longer so important? Well, to adjust biodynamics to our tropical climate in Peru that would be relevant. And also to create an exchange, a network. A worldwide network. There are already some regional or national networks but how to keep in touch worldwide to understand what we have in common, to see that we are not alone in our struggle.

Biodynamic agriculture is left behind its opportunities and global needs.

If the biodynamic movement wants to play a part in the future, it has to become more professional and emerge from its trench warfare. Simply to do what one says one can.

If one really understands that we are not the victims but the doers and that what we do ultimately depends on us, then we have made a step forwards.

In India, we have over one hundred million hectares of what we call <man made waste land>, that becomes like semi desert.

That food is the basis for opportunities is not perceived, we do not need more businesses but we have to develop the business we have so that



they really culminate our task. This is what I can't see at the moment.

People who ask for something, maybe to become healthy, definitely outnumber those that have something to offer.

Schools have an increasing demand. I am less aware of a material hunger than a soul-spiritual one. How does one respond to this? In all questions which we address we also have to remember our livelihood. How do we do this?

Customer: An ability to develop, from my view as customer, is to be pro-active towards the customer. These days there are farm open days, but they are more of an «Exhibitions» rather than an invitation to a structure dialogue with the periphery.

Farmer: Only when we really opened up did a dialogue with the customer take place. Then one notices how the people begin to start asking questions when they are shown around the farm and you begin to think: Ah, yes – this is not at all obvious for them that things are done this or that way. For me this question doesn't arise but for them it does.

Movement assumes networking. If one doesn't know anything about each other, than one isn't part of a common movement.

How does one apply Steiner's ideas today?

In Egypt I learnt: They approach things with an incredible pragmatism and openness. They say: Of course, we are not perfect. But they simply try things out and that is why they are being snubbed by the biodynamic movement, because this is not by the book.

How do we metamorphose? We as a movement?

Quality, deepening and versification ... these are my three bullet points for future development.

It takes a community of volunteers to hold a farm.

That islands come about and turn into new models for living which spread and develop: Urban Farming, City Planting, Energy Efficiency, 100% renewable energy, a great transformation, transition towns and so on. These are key words which for me are connected and which have to be put into practice in specific places where biodynamic agriculture is applied.

So I hope, Demeter International, the Goetheanum, the Hochschule – they really start thinking: my god, what is our role for this planet?

ACTING OUT OF ONE AWARENESS

The path towards a humane world economy

To come to the Agriculture Conference at the Goetheanum resembles a little the feeling of coming home, not because my parents are here as farmers but it also means back to agriculture, back to the anthroposophical movement with which I feel connected although I rarely experience it in my day to day life.

The reason behind studying economics, and later to go to America, for me was an interest in the transformation of capitalism, how the society in which we grew up could be changed. This transformation of society has to come through the economy. I wrote my Ph.D. on this subject which was of no interest to anyone. How do I do this in practice? This question led me to the MIT Boston, because there they do research into the notion that one only understands a social system when one has changed it. My work found an interest when it was applied to organisational and learning processes. This has now become my area of work, and due to the problems over the last decade it has become possible to also put the question of economic systems.

The question which leads me to you is what do these two questions which I have described, have in common: the practical stream within biodynamic agriculture and the change of society, the social, ecological and spiritual renewal of our civilisation. What is the link? I remember the field excursions which Wilhelm-Ernst Barkhoff and Albert Fink made where this was also the question. The question which I would like to put at the forefront today is, how do I/we have to re-think ecology so that agriculture and biodynamic farms become the architect of a social, socio-ecological and spiritual renewal?

That is the basis for this week. How do we achieve an awareness of the present? I would like to suggest that we take note of two aspects of the social field. On the one hand we constantly face the situation where existing structures have become fixed and die. We are surrounded by outdated social forms which in reality are already dead but which still continue. But then, suddenly they

collapse with more or less upheaval. On the other hand we see the sprouting force of the new. We are being touched by another social sphere where something new wants to come about which isn't as yet visible, which we can only sense. A social sphere where we start to relate differently to each other and to ourselves. We are constantly dealing with processes of dying and death as the old wears out. Then we are dealing with creative processes which are often widespread. This is something one can experience with oneself but of course also in the wider sphere. **A suggestion: Put your note books away and think: Where do I experience something that is dying, where do I experience something new that wants to come into the world?**

Back to the question of economics. Where can it be experienced in its purest form? In nature, because this is where productivity is at home. But when we manage a farm other things come into play: first of all work. We work with nature. This work requires resources. They are capital and tools. We need various tools, not only computers. Preparations are tools to. What else do we need? A meaningful combination of tools and work, we need management, leadership. This is about an awareness of the whole where one is not only concerned with the now but with perspectives.

In all economic processes we have to co-operate beyond boundaries without one individual determining the how and what. That is the production process. Then there is the marketing question; and a final point, I want to call it «Coordination Mechanism», this means the complete link between customer and supplier, producer and farmer. A «construction» we know very well. So far nothing new has been said. Today we are dealing with a fundamental crisis of the old forms. We are aware that what we are doing is not working. Why not? Here a few statistics:

Nature: Every year humanity consumes 1.4-times as much as the earth is able to re-produce. We deplete and destroy natural resources. This is on the increase year by year. In the past 40



years, 30% of agricultural land has been destroyed through erosion. 30% in one generation. 3 to 4 billion people live below the poverty threshold. 1% of people own 40% of the overall wealth. The lowest 50% together own less than 1% of overall wealth.

Capital: 2006 167 Trillion Dollars circulated around the earth as liquid capital, that is three to four times more than GDP. What does this capital do? It is looking for highly speculative investment. And that produces the next bubble.

Technology: We have Biotec-Companies which are doing the same for agriculture as Wall Street Banks are for the economy. Toxic products which produce a bubble for which the weakest will have to pay in the end.

Management: Leadership today is still hierarchical, in the pyramid mode. This has survived in small and in large businesses.

Co-ordination Mechanism: What do we see? An interesting development in four stages: the first phase was hierarchy and power, state power, planned economy from above down. The second is market economy and competition, a play of strength. The market is being declared as the saviour and therefore it is a market fundamentalism. Everything becomes tradeable, including human labour. The third co-ordination mechanism which has developed over the past 50 years, is the civil society. Here life is regulated through networking dialogues, through understanding each others interests and situation. Social control regulates capitalism.

However, there is a fourth stage which rests on a common consciousness. Awareness based collective action. Here we create a common awareness with our customers, with the periphery, where everyone acts out of discernment for the situation and out of shared circumstances and not out of self-interest, that means not out of an ego-consciousness. In English I call this «from Ego System Awareness to Eco System Awareness». This is not only market economy. In a market economy we are driven by

an ego-consciousness. What does a customer relationship look like? Is it only about produce? This is only the first level. Secondly it is about experience. Customers come to the farm and they experience something. A third level is where it is not only about what is experienced but here an awareness is awakened. We are no longer at an exhibition, but we enter into a dialogue in which one begins to see oneself as part of the whole. Fourthly is a farm as a place of calm where I can access my deeper self where I am really myself. This is a consciousness widening, a deepening. Here I notice whom I really am and why I am here. When I awaken to a deeper level of my Self I can reach shared impulses of action. Indeed there is much to learn from this dialogue. Here it is a community which lies beyond the self that inspires us.

We manage the global ecological, social problems by expanding the consciousness of those involved from ego-consciousness to shared consciousness. Rudolf Steiner called it association. That is the challenge for our generation. Could it be that the birth of this consciousness of a shared social, ecological and spiritual connection wants to be realized first on a local level? It is difficult to paint the abstract connections, but at a local agricultural level they are visible. This fourth economical phase asks for a shared consciousness to enter into all areas of economic life, to awaken on that level where we are still asleep. The civil movement also takes this direction. That is a large movement. What role do we play? Ecology and sustainability alone will no longer make a difference, now it is about more than that, it is about the inner space of each and every one who so developed is able to create a new community. It is a building site for all of us. I am looking forward to working together on these themes.

Claus-Otto Scharmer studied economic sciences in Witten/Herdecke. He is a Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and founder of the Presencing Institute..

EARTH'S DIGNITY

A Plea

From burning issues to beacons of light is the title of the conference. Yes it is burning indeed. There are one billion people who go hungry and half of them produce food. Something is going dreadfully wrong when even farmers and gardeners have to go hungry. This fact did not arise over night but happened in two steps. First industrialisation agriculture, the «green Revolution» which is neither green nor revolutionary. Bill Gates and his financially strong foundation are a leading force in AGRA (Alliance for a green revolution in Africa). They see agriculture as a war and the weapons are pesticides and fertilizers benefiting the chemical industry; however it is against the people. Instead of biodiversity we have monoculture. Our small holdings are reduced, forestry and animal husbandry were banished. Fertility has decreased. What has been advertised as a step against world hunger was a path to hunger. Local seeds were patented and prices increased so that farmers became poorer. In India the so-called BT-Cotton was introduced. However, the American highly cultivated cotton also brought the boll-worm to India. Thirteen times as much pesticides were required. The consequences in India are so drastic that since 1979 an unbelievably 25.000 suicides, mainly amongst farmers, have been recorded. We can prove that 85% of these suicides are linked to BT-cotton. In India we say a prayer during sowing: «May the seed be inexhaustible» referring to the seed as the seed of life. From agricultural business like Monsanto I hear: «May the seed be exhaustible so that profits are inexhaustible.» Therefore we are working together in a big coalition of movements in order to safeguard the diversity of seeds. Maintaining a diversity is the basis of life. There are many who believe food is just a commodity. But food as commodity does not fit into the circle of life. When food becomes a commodity it becomes worthwhile to use 70% of US-cereal as animal fodder, and speculation increases the price of bread. When we begin to see food as sacred, then we re-discover how sacred

our earth is. Those who concern themselves about the earth, the farmers, are doing this service. It is about the sacredness of life.

This year is not only Rudolf Steiner's 150th anniversary but it is also the 150th anniversary of our national poet Tagore. He wrote a wonderful poem to Mother Earth. It says: «I will pour my songs into your mute heart, and my love into your love. I will worship you with labour. I have seen your tender face and I love your mournful dust, Mother Earth.» This sentence: «I will worship you with love» is important. Claus-Otto Scharmer has already emphasised: Everything starts with nature. It gives us everything, but what do we give in return? Only our beloved effort. And this sacred work has been declared a curse. Productive agriculture today means to be able to do without human labour. American agriculture thus is the most productive because there less people live on the land than in prisons.

But why this attack on small holders everywhere in the world? It is a last refuge of freedom! Recently I interviewed organic farmers in the Indian mountains. An old woman was asked why she farmed in this terrible place. Her reply was: «It is the only way of being completely free» Every human being needs food, therefore agriculture counts as a primary economy which gains its vitality from the diversity and initiative of the whole of society. Besides the biological dangers from genetically modified plants there are also legal dangers. Patented genomes are not there for breeding reasons but to gamble on Wall Street. The aim is that every grain that we want to plant we pay the apparent owners. It is an attack on two fronts: They destroy independent seed supply through over-regulation and force us to buy the patented seeds. North Africa is freeing itself of dictatorships and here we are establishing an economic dictatorship which wants to get hold of the planet's resources. It is a next step in dominance of the earth after owning the land. This too speaks of a terrifying



dynamic. Rich states and businesses buy land in Africa. They say that 76% of the earth's bio mass is still unused. A woman collecting fire wood in order to cook a meal, camels grazing on pasture - all this is viewed as wasted bio mass. As if they were saying: That a river's water flows into the sea is a waste of water.

We are looking towards the future and we now that the biological and cultural diversity and de-centralised structures are the basis for a healthy and fruitful development. Here we do not fear comparisons. 14 quintals of rice can be produced by a biodynamically managed hectare of land, whilst land farmed with chemical fertilizer and monoculture only gives 12 quintals. They say that the «chemical» rice is more productive because the financial profit is higher. Then we have to look at protein, carbon-hydrates and fat. 338 units for 90 with the chemical system. Folic Acid which is needed by pregnant women, 554 to 0, or calcium 3420 to 100. We have made a rough calculation. If we were to realize this expanded ecological system that respects life and national cultures in all Arab countries, we would have enough food for 2,5 Billion people, more than double the population of India. You have probably heard of the golden rice which prevents blindness because it contains Beta Carotin. We have discovered that our local rice contains more of it. Neither do we need genetically modified rice for Vitamin A. Ecological cultivation in India can produce sufficient Vitamin A for 1,5 Billion people and Folic Acid for 1,7 Billion pregnant women. There is no reason for children to starve. And yet in India annually one million children do due to malnourishment. Why? Because food is no longer grown but commodities. And the diversity of human food has shrunk from 8500 plants to mainly eight worldwide traded commodities. In my book «Soil not Oil» I work on the assumption of IBCC-Data. This shows that 40% of the climate problem has been caused by industrial agriculture and food production and thus could be solved by biodynamic cultivation. The

objection usually raised is emission trading. This has increased the emissions by 16% and made the perpetrators richer and richer. We are faced with a world where everything is a commodity and life is being privatised and industrialised with the result that the work of small holders is criminalized. President Evo Morales of Bolivia had the courage to demand a general declaration of rights for Mother Earth. In our time we have to recognise that without this right by Mother Earth there will be no human rights. The moment we accept that, a sacred band is woven between man and earth. A band which is found in the spiritual cosmologies of many cultures. We are entering exciting times if we are able to do away with the old divisions between North and South, between producer and consumer, between farmer and scientist on the path to a different consciousness. The earth is the reason for a new civilization. From the small country of Bhutan I received an invitation to switch their agriculture 100% to biodynamic. The government had discovered that growth also has to include personal happiness.

I want to close with the wish that create much more community and inter-action: between centres like the Goetheanum, all farms where you are working and all areas where human freedom is seen as a value. The most important thing we have learnt from Gandhi is the expression «Satyagraha». This means the force of the soul for truth. When we look towards the future we have to keep an eye on the wonderful majesty of the earth. The freedom to decide what we eat and what not lies in our hands. Wendell Berry expressed it fantastically: Eating is an agricultural act. What we consume is what we support. They are small actions which, multiplied over the whole earth will start a food revolution. Let's do it together!

Vandana Shiva is an Indian Rights Campaigner and Environmentalist. She studied Quantum Physics and received the Alternative Nobel Prize in 1993. Her recent book: «Life without Oil».

PREPARATIONS

For a spiritual life

In the Leading Thoughts nos. 153-155, «What is the earth in reality within the macrocosm?» Rudolf Steiner shows the evolution of the earth and man. The cosmos died and thus made human freedom possible. Nature's process of dying in winter bare witness to the same forces that also allowed the cosmos to die. However, life forces are not exhausted by plant shoots in spring. A surplus of life forces remains. This surplus sprouting force streams into the macrocosm. Out of these plant forces a new macrocosm is formed, regulated by mineral forces. The earthly stands newly enlivened within the dead macrocosm. The earth is thus not a speck of dust within the universe, but resembles a plant seed full of future potential. Man lives in both processes: In thinking he is part of the dying process whilst in his will he relates to the budding stream. As human beings we are capable to perceive the budding mineral, plant and animal and thus comprehend the future stream beyond the will. The certainty that the earth is the embryonic germ of a future macrocosm can be grasped within the mind.

The 183 anthroposophical Leading Thoughts are something special in Rudolf Steiner's work. Hardly any other writing makes such striking statements whilst at the same time being so mysterious, sounding simple yet being difficult to comprehend. Here, without reservation, Rudolf Steiner develops great thought pictures on the physical, soul and spiritual life of man, the cosmos and the gods. «Given out as suggestions from the Goetheanum» is the header to these leading thoughts for anthroposophical work. Working with them is to be completely free and yet these thoughts are meant to enhance «the unity and organic wholeness of the work of the Society». This may be the reason why the study of the Leading Thoughts, this later work by Rudolf Steiner, has for many years been central to the conference. If you study the texts, allowing Rudolf Steiner to take you by the hand, then you may discover that the Leading Thoughts, in their mature form, are something comparable to the preparations for a spiritual life. Thomas Lüthi, Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Hurter each made sketches on the «anthroposophical preparations» Thomas Lüthi is a member of the leadership team of the Section for Agriculture and is President of Demeter International. | Jean-Michel Florin is Coordinator for the Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Association in France and also a member of the leadership team of the Section for Agriculture.

BUILDING ON

THE EARTH'S FUTURE

We have a natural relationship to our earthly environment. We can touch things. But what about our cosmic environment? We experience sunrise and sunset and at the same time we know that the earth turns around its own axis. We know the distance to moon, sun and stars. When these dimensions become an experience one feels an emptiness, a void.

But everything is connected: life forces take hold of minerals, animals digest plants. The one joins the other and the part serves the whole. Life processes run rhythmically. The seed opens to the environment, unfolding, winter rest, growth with the sun and flowers arise out of the buds. Pollen is released and taken away by air and wind. **The development of the seed depends on whether a communication, in the form of pollen, comes from the future.** The stream of the past is not sufficient.

In Sweden you can stand below a birch tree at the beginning of May and listen to the opening buds. First the leaves are translucent, then they condense into leaves. The leaf goes through spring and summer. At the same time a mark develops in the axle of the leaf. Autumn comes and the matured leaf colours yellow, others red and withers. It becomes heavy and falls to the ground. It has become darker and colder, the whole of nature breathes in. When the matured leaf has fulfilled its task and enters the withering process, the germination of the new begins. Rudolf Steiner describes how the plant does not just grow for its own development but how it develops a surplus energy which streams into the cosmos.

Surplus forces from minerals give direction to the plants. At the same time spaces are created in nature and on farms through the activities of the animals which, depending on species, are of specific concentration. The earth has the task of renewing the macrocosm. For this it has to fight against the impulse to continue with the old. Out of the dust particle earth, a new macrocosm is born and the old, dead one has disintegrated. This means that we live and act at a decisive moment in time, at a turning point.

The question about the meaning and goal of one's own life thus receives a great reply. Within the earth's being exists a sprouting world. Every plant form, every stone, each one of these beings contributes to the earth becoming the embryonic germ of a new, revived macrocosm. Do we recognise this and seize the opportunity to follow it up?

NATURAL SURPLUS

Rudolf Steiner speaks of «superfluous forces of germination» in nature. Don't nature's forces loose energy? How is it possible to understand this contradiction? I will start with a winter walk in the Vosges: I am walking along the edge of a beach forest, the sky is blue, the soul is light. Everything is happy as if heaven was reaching down to earth. The bare beaches are decked with frost, ice needles are glimmering in the sun to the background of the blue sky. The whole atmosphere appears linear.

Snowflakes fall off a tree: surprised I note that all snowflakes are subject to the same principle and yet each one is different. The usual thought arises that snow is water and yet, they are both quite different. In order for me to drink water, snow would have to loose its form. Either one has the substance or the form. Are the crystallising forces restricted to substance or do they penetrate space? Is there not a surplus of invisible, available forces which enable crystallisation?

And suddenly the atmosphere changes: A sound, a small sharp shriek from one of the trees. My attention is drawn from space to point. *Something is moving in the tree, a greenly ball of feathers, a bird. Although it moves it remains within the shadow of the fir branches.* It lends soul to the landscape. It is as if it communicates its own inner atmosphere to the world through its song. Every animal lends its special character to its surroundings. This creates a sphere, a self-enclosed totality.

Moving on I discover areas of snow where I think – is the snow dirty? Upon looking closer it becomes clear that it is an accumulation of birch seeds. The dust particles are seeds. I try to imagine the birch which might grow out of the seeds. Out of this surplus potential only one will grow, precisely at that moment when the seed germinates and the plant connects to its environment. What happens to the non-realised potential? Are these not the surplus forces of which the Michael letters speak?

Mineral, plant and animal incarnate as best as possible into existing conditions and the unused surplus of forces belongs to the cosmos. These different surplus forces come together to create a new macrocosm.

THE FUTURE OF ORA ET LABORA

Where man's will is at work we find access to what is burgeoning, to that level of the earth's being which is a seed for the future macrocosm. Because will is subconscious this connection remains hidden. Where we work physically, consciousness is elusive, we are a little «stupid». This stupidity is interesting. Already in times gone past did intelligent children leave the farm. The others became farmers. Therefore agriculture has been sheltered from intellectualisation for so long. This kind of stupidity is not longer possible today. Yet it is a fact, according to the Michael letters and life experience, that the future is not accessible to thinking but to willing. How can we be stupid in a futuristic sense? Do we have a chance to develop ourselves as willing beings as stated in this letter so that a design of the future is possible? I would like to give three examples where I found some of this nature of the will.

For weeks one has wanted to mow, but the weather does not play ball. The will jams. If a gap arises everything has to give way to the «I want». Empathy is lost. It is as if one was wearing armoury. That which strengthens us and brings success, the fiery forces of the will, can become a social barrier.

The second experience concerns the long term will. It is surprising that we do not give up. Although everything we plan takes longer than expected. What force is it that makes us endure? It is the force that meets these goals from the future as an advent stream. They are the ideals which come out of the stream of will, the ideal future which will come and is already here.

What used to be called «Pray and Work» is now fulfilled in this commitment. This «Pray and Work» as community rule has made it possible to cultivate nature. Today this can only be achieved out of individual responsibility, out of a will for the future, the conscience. The earth is a seed and not a dust particle. That is one of the ideals which quicken when it takes longer than expected.

There are situations, as for example stirring a preparation over an hour, where the «I want» becomes an «It wants». This little «I want» meets a great will in doing and this will awakens my I. My will substance meets what is wanted now. This passing over into each other is an experience of the presence of that spirit who is being addressed in the letter as «Michael». This encounter changes us and therefore I call this willing «destiny willing».

WE ARE CHANGING

Agriculture as a place for becoming human

In the Agricultural Course Rudolf Steiner states that agriculture is linked to the wider spheres of life, not just to our farm and our geographic region, but with the earth, the whole cosmos. Therefore the Agricultural Course starts with cosmic realities, the stars and planets and then goes deeper, right into the qualities of the soil. It is important to remember this when we talk about the burning issues on our farms. These burning questions cannot find answers on the level of the farm but only within a larger context. Every farm has its place within a global economy and in the whole cosmos. Yesterday Claus-Otto Scharmer asked two questions: What is dying? What is emerging? **What dies drags humanity away from its cosmic picture to a very different kind of humanity.** Yet whilst economical, political and cultural institutions are dying, there is also a birth in this death. I think we have to understand this in order to learn the historical lessons which our movement is facing now, for example with regard to genetic engineering. Genetic engineering is already outdated compared to synthetic biology. The actual construction of life forms has not been possible until now, but synthetic biology indeed creates artificial life, or what you understand as artificial life. The thoughts that animate such enterprises are based on the understanding that the whole universe is mechanical. Everything which is labelled extreme technology moves the agricultural situation into a different direction. The first centre which works on such ideals for a future agriculture was opened in Brazil this year. Through fast prototyping over 52 technologies which arose over the past decades and which are very powerful by themselves, are now applied combined. Nanotechnology, Bio-

technology, Information Technology and Cognitive Technology, which includes artificial intelligence. When this combines the impact on agriculture will be dramatic. What is the picture that lives there, of a future agriculture? Yesterday Vandana Shiva said that these researcher are not happy that only 26 % of the earth's biomass is used. They claim that this is a great waste and that we have to make use of 100 % of the biomass. That means that trees, shrubs and matter with a high carbon content have to be turned into pulp through a variety of chemical and nano-technical processes, so that all kinds of food, medicine and beverages can be produced from it. That is the nano-technological dream. The intention really exists to build such factories in Brazil and this means that the future of agriculture is no longer on the land. It will then be separate of any link to the cosmos. You can guess what this means with regard to human food, the opportunities for human consciousness and the future of the planet.

This is not an empty dream because billions of dollars are being spent on this. Another aspect is geo-engineering. This looks at the possibility to solve the problems of climate change technologically. For example by filtering sunlight or the cooling of cloud formations which are created through artificial volcanic eruptions, or miniature particles which are being emitted into the oceans and which are intended to bind carbon dioxide. Scientists and entrepreneurs move into this direction because the costs are manageable. What they are not saying is what the consequences are for Asia and Africa. There it can lead to massive droughts whilst the climate in the USA and Europe becomes milder. This brings us



back to Apartheid, where the poor suffer from the side effects. But then there are also forces which stream upwards. This happens a little outside the biodynamic movement. However, if it wanted to it could enter into a fruitful relationship. Let me mention two of such elevating initiatives: There are approaches in science which are truly astonishing and which are now infiltrating conventional science. All that you call «new sciences», for example epigenetic biology. There is an amazing contrast between synthetic biology and epigenetic, which has now entered the main stream. It says that DNA, contrary to hitherto assumptions, is not the central determining factor of life. It is important but other factors also play a role, for example the cytoplasmic environment of the genome or the surrounding cell tissue, the behaviour of the organism and even consciousness itself. Despite this, with synthetic biology we have the phenomena that theories produce technologies with increasing speed whose scientific basis is rather questionable. In contrast, epigenetic biology explains some of the amazing processes which take place in biodynamic agriculture. Therefore it is a matter of the heart to understand what is happening in this area. Even closer to what is referred to in the Leading Thoughts are developments in Astrophysics. One of its basic assumptions, supported by the unbelievable harmony and order of the universe, is that the universe is indeed ruled by a higher intelligence. In its creation as in all life which unites the earth and all galaxies to a great whole and that there lies a wisdom behind the developing universe. That is quite a strong picture and it is surprising that colleagues from another field arrive at such concurrent picture. It is interesting that Rudolf Steiner incarnated in 1861 creating

the foundations for a perception for an upward trust and which make a conscious participation in the cosmos possible. At the end of his life he spoke about the uprising of sub-nature and its technological consequences. He speaks about the need to develop a consciousness that is just as forceful as the fall of consciousness. It is about metamorphosing these forces, not as enemies of technology but with the question of how one can make use of it so that humanity and the planet can be served. Only this consciousness force can offer a balance so that we are not pulled into the grave of civilisation. We cannot solve the challenges we are facing in the biodynamic work, unless our consciousness itself is transformed at a deeper more fundamental level, as we shall see and hopefully will experience in the lab. Who are we as human beings? That is the basic question of our planet and also the question that awaits us in the U . Who are we? What is our task? An amazing, cosmic drama is taking place through us and the planet for which we have to awaken as biodynamic farmers. The work on our farms is not being done to produce food however important this may be for mankind. Neither do we work for ecology. In the end our task is a deep discovery of ourselves and the question why we are here. Biodynamic farms can become places for a new community . We, ourselves, will change with this process and so will our work and the outcome of this drama, this fall or rise depends on us.

Nicanor Perlas is a Sociologist, Agrarian Scientist and Environmental Activist. He founded the Centre for Development Alternatives and holds the Alternative Nobel price.

FUTURE WORKSHOP

Tools for higher alertness

There are two ways of learning. One draws conclusions for the future from the past, from past experiences and insights. The other is less known: less assured and more exciting, it is the daily bread of artists and inventors because this is learning from the future, or as Claus-Otto Scharmer called it, learning from the enfolding future. Whilst logic and knowledge are part of «old» learning, here attention and presence are the driving force. The more complex the presence is and the quicker the wheel turns, the more important becomes this still little known form of learning. The word «Repent» (change your ways) is 2000 years old, however it has never been as topical as today. To understand it a-new, either in sole contemplation, in discussion with one, five or more than 300 people, was the aim of the twelve hour future workshop facilitated by Nicanor Perlas and Claus-Otto Scharmer, as well as co-facilitators and translators. It is social field work which is familiar to every gardener, says Scharmer. **You know that plant growth, visible vitality, is based on an invisible life energy from within the earth.** It was about this inner earth force. It is silent and unspectacular but at times it was at hand with such intensity and fervour rendering participants speechless over this present beyond thoughts and language.

«What dies and what wants to become?», was one of the starter questions. In order to answer this question in more detail, Perlas and Scharmer pointed to the four stages of alertness which arise during speaking and listening.

1. Uncoiling Habits of Judging | Only to hear what is familiar and only to say what others want to hear is not really communication. Claus-Otto Scharmer thus speaks of an autistic system, i.e. I don't say what I think. | Downloading.

2. Factual Listening/Speaking | I am able to comprehend facts including those contradicting my own knowledge. I register different points of view. I am able to articulate my point of view. Now discussion is possible. | Adaptive System, i.e. say what I think, I hear the facts.

3. Empathetic Listening/Speaking | I am able to empathise with the speaker and can see things through his eyes; I can share his experience. I hear what he is trying to say rather what he says. An emotional, inner contact comes about. I speak about myself as part of the whole and rise from defence to discovery of points of view. Now dialogue is possible. | Self-reflective System. I see myself.

4. Generative Listening/Speaking | I am able to hear the source out of which is being spoken. It is a creative listening. A new connection comes about with the future whole, a transformation of identity and self. I speak about an opportunity in the making, stillness, collective creativity and the stream of creative energy becomes visible. | Generative System, I am myself.

One of Claus-Otto Scharmer's discovery is that stage 2 is about sovereignty or the opening up of thinking and stage 3 an opening of the feeling life. The final stage is an opening up of the will.

Alertness is a condition of being.
It is a condition without which we will never be able to be whole.
It is in fact the ear of the universe.

JACQUES LUSSEYRAN, A NEW WAY OF SEEING THE WORLD

When mutual attention had reached the fourth stage, many participants noticed that less conceptions and ideas were at hand which is part of the nature of will which thus experiences its freedom. It is worthwhile to compare these four stages with Rudolf Steiner's evolutionary steps of creation-effect-revelation-being. Whilst with empathetic listening the other is able to reveal him/herself, a real encounter between beings is only possible with the creative listening. The four stages of the Christian mass, Gospel, sacrifice, transubstantiation, communion can also shed light on this process. Communion creates an affinity.

In the «Worldcafe» the four stages of listening and speaking were tested as a service to a higher alertness. Around small tables sat five people each who had not met before. It started with a short introduction: Name, Place and reason why they came to the conference. Then each of the five is given the opportunity to briefly describe where the dying process is visible in his/her environment and where his/her heart beats and where something new is coming about. Deep listening by the others creates the vessel for the comments. Then one talks about the surprises and insights. Finally we move to other tables and it starts again. Exactly the fact that one doesn't know each other and yet can be assured of a great empathy, helps to be free of personal habits and get to the point.

In order to get to the pictures of the personal «future which is entering the present» beyond the spoken images, a

fourfold artistic exercise, reflected upon with one partner each, was added later. This fourfold exercise moves backwards from beingness via revelation and effect to creation.

1. Make a sculpture which represents your present situation and future opportunities. Describe every step to your partner.
2. View your sculpture from four different angles. Your partner asks the following questions and notes down the answers: What do you like about the sculpture? Which are the difficult truths/conflicts? What is coming to an end and what wants to be born? What is most important about the sculpture, what should it be called?
3. Change your sculpture so that the future, which you want to bring, is better expressed.
4. Hold on to the most important points you have learnt.

This is followed by community sculptures and sculptures in movement, sculptures in dialogue as representatives of all customers, gardeners, banks, authorities and nature. Whilst one viewer noted clumsy movements, participants described how they were touched by a wave of will and of community.

At the end of the plenum, when many of the gained ideas had been compacted into projects, Claus-Otto Scharmer made three suggestions so that the energy which had grabbed and lifted probably all participants would not ebb away. Every day find some peace and quiet to reflect. Find someone who supports you on your path and remain true to yourself and your new idea.



BEACONS OF LIGHT

Five of sixty initiatives

The U-process of the conference led to the «Market place for initiatives». The spectrum of these beacons of light was tremendous and very large and it was a mirror of the mood of the conference. A considerable number of initiatives made a pioneering impression. Just as it is difficult to say what is to become of a little plant shoot. It speaks of the quality of the process during the conference that many initiatives showed that they had come out of deep soul levels. These shoots must develop within a protected environment. No different from a little plant, hope and confidence support the wish that something lasting will become of it. – A different group of beacons of light reminds very much of the collated burning issues. What showed itself from a point of urgency and concern at the start of the conference, now, at the end of the conference, shines as a beacon of light. This change became alive through inner work and dialogue which is difficult to explain in writing. Below is a selection of beacons of light which included more than one initiative. These beacons of light could develop into future projects for the biodynamic movement. Those interested should contact the Agriculture Section.

Connect Many initiatives include a new way of connecting and networking. On the one hand one is confident on ones own and wants to be, on the other hand a new way of connecting is considered. It is about a connection between people and impulses, between farm and periphery. A new way of community building is in the air and many can feel it but not quite name it.

Bees «What are the bees telling us?» In many countries a high rate of dying bees is being observed. What do bees want to tell us with this? Is it about bee-keeping, the Varoa-treatment? Probably this too, but it is also about creating new social environments for bees. Every bee colony needs a «Human Colony». How can we arrange it that many Demeter farms keep bees and that a human community is so connected to them that on the one hand the bees find proper living conditions and on the other hand that between man and farm a new, viable social network develops. One of many possibilities to make this reality was formulated as: «CSB – Consumer Supported Bee-keeping»

An international network for the social inclusion of bees could receive public support through the new film by Taggart Siegel «Queen of the Sun».

Who owns the earth Soil, seeds, water air ... The very basic resources of agriculture are in danger. Not only through nature destruction but also through robbery. We are experiencing a gigantic and rapid programme of privatisation of these common resources. Should we, as biodynamic movement just look away? It is obvious that seeds should not be patented and that resource should not be sold. But how can common goods be guarded meaningfully in a social context without collectivisation? This social question is topical worldwide. How can we, looking for example at the question of land, find new ways of social contextualisation?

Learning by Doing Biodynamics cannot be understood, developed or researched intellectually. This is only possible by doing. The future, unknown and new comes out of doing. But if we only work through the will, we are still lacking awareness. How can one add awareness into willing and feeling? How has thinking to be developed so that it can learn from actions and from a practical attitude to agriculture? A new scientific approach for everyone was formulated by some initiatives.

The Ambassadors Young adults who have completed their biodynamic training, want to escape into the world prior to fully committing to the farm. Maybe they could bring what they have learnt to a place where biodynamics are still in their early beginnings, for example projects in South Africa, Morocco, Southern India or in Peru? And at the same time there is the wish and the need to discover the traditional wisdom of how the farmers in these places work on the land, in the house and their economy. Human beings are the ambassadors which give and take. They help to start biodynamics in one place and report and document about the local knowledge. A practical cultural exchange which can help to create a personal network between North and South, West and East.



Before I begin, I would like to thank you from my heart for the commitment that everyone has shown. It is heart warming to see such a process because we experienced really valuable moments despite our very different backgrounds. There really was a point at the bottom of the U, where we all understood each other despite our differences.

Well, what can we do that this special experience does not fade away when we return to our daily structures? Claus-Otto spoke of three ways to keep alive what has been experienced here – not as download, but as a refreshing source of inspiration. I would like to finish off by trying to point to another source into which we can tap, a source of the highest possibilities. For this I would like to recall what we had at hand every day in the great leading thoughts («What is the earth in reality within the Macrocosm?») For me this has been very harmonious because it gives us great, challenging pictures which at the same time are pictures which allow our will to continue for decades (into the future and beyond). This kind of picture for which we have descended to hear it and to live for it. Because, dear friends, Steiner was occupied with very deep issues during his last years. Issues which concern our present. He was occupied with the end of the last century, our time. From his perspective he saw in clear pictures where mankind was going. That is the picture that he constructed in the Michael-Letters: about sub-nature and the approaching division of mankind into two directions. The freedom we have to create a new world will be used by some to pull mankind down and others will decide to carry on within the stream of world evolution.

That for me is an important picture which lives with me continuously, and which gives my life reason. If we leave everything else aside and only take seriously what it means to be part of a future universe, then that is a great responsibility. For me it is this kind of picture which allows us to stay close to the source and not

DEEP TIME

Close

to forget why we are actually here. The biodynamic movement offers a great opportunity to bring this to mind simply through the practices of agriculture, because it continuously makes us aware of the cosmos, the earth and all its forces which are active involved in this journey towards a new planetary civilisation. It is interesting that present culture shows a picture which agrees with what Steiner painted for our time.

I had a good friend who has just died, his name was Tom Berry. He was a cultural scientist and he spoke of seeing the present in the context of what he called «deep time». What is «deep time»? It is not the normal time. It is a recognition of the fact that from the beginning of the physical creation of the universe until the appearance of human consciousness on this planet is a continuing line, an ongoing link and a reason for our presence here on earth. «Deep time» is what we have when we look at how weather, snow, rain and warmth effect our farms. If we hold «deep time» in our consciousness then we understand that we are responsible for taking the earth where it wants to go. In this sense I would like to find out what it means to be young. So that we are able to receive spiritual forces of youth. To be really young means to stand at the source of this meaningful stream of «deep time» and to see our work within the context of this great opportunity which faces us. Young people have understood this and us older people can develop by becoming more flexible and by maintaining a youthful energy with surplus to create a new world.

In a sense we always work with youth and death forces. I mention this because now we are incarnating what we have seen as a future possibility. This process of incarnation might not even be perfect ,because despite everything, the future is not determined. It expresses itself and happens through us. And it may even be imperfect. Therefore the method of «rapid-prototyping»

in the U-process does not offer a perfect solution, and it does not have to be the ultimate vision of the world, but it offers a humble dialogue with the future, with the forces which stand behind this future. Then we can also understand failures and look at challenges anew. This is not an invitation to play the fool. But it is the nature of things to incarnate the future so that it also develops until forms are truly expressed as they should be.

Dear colleagues, to give birth to the new mysteries also means to bring new social processes into the world. That is what we experience. When we now return to our homes, the imagination remains that everywhere in the world people stand on their farms with their specific social periphery, within a larger biodynamic movement, in a larger world all of which have the will, the conscience, the vision and determination to bring about a new world. Much is at stake! I want to compare this situation with the Tsunami which hit Indonesia a few years ago. **This Tsunami arrived with the speed of a Boeing 747.** Nobody saw it coming on the horizon. The horizon was small, no sign of danger. A few hours later ten thousands of people were dead. The technological Tsunami (which was referred to in this room over these days) comes with the same speed. It is the wave which divides mankind into two groups. If we can show the world from our biodynamic farms what it means to be a real human being, then we already sow the basis for a metamorphosis of this technological Tsunami which is about to hit us. The truth of this technological Tsunami is that mankind has no future, that it is a construction of the past.

I wanted to share these thoughts so that, in tune with the leading thoughts which we have heard each morning, the imaginations which are the foundation of this movement, warms our hearts and strengthen our will with visions and courage to be part of its creation. Thank you, it was wonderful to work with you.

RESONANCE

Some time ago I learnt from the Goetheanum heating technician that the heating during the Agriculture Conference switches itself off. The warmth of the people streams out and heats more than enough. But what is it that makes the Agriculture Conference always a bit different and a bit more attractive, also for me, a local resident?

I felt it again – even stronger than usual, that everything was taken hold of anew, even during the difficult times at the Goetheanum with redundancies: there was the question of how the existing vacuum could be freshly filled. And if so with what? In the midst of the equally new situation within the Agriculture Section, a new step has been taken whose dimensions are not yet visible. Thus I entered the Great Hall during the Agriculture Conference and saw many empty places, turned around and spotted all 300 participants of the «Laboratory» on the stage. They were working together. The old form of lectures from the front only happened on the periphery. Instead, we worked with clay or strolled quietly through the grounds. People stood on tables, laid on the floor, lifted their hands towards the sky or against their mouths during the creation of human sculptures. All this happened in a workshop-atmosphere in small groups. We opened ourselves to these sculptures and within us pictures arose which again led us to new inner spaces which said more than any words. Here work was being done directly and very clearly on the current life

situations of every participant, whilst at the same time a vision of the future was unfolded with a force not experienced hitherto. Particularly important was also this aspect of work: To build bridges. The often missing step, the most difficult to achieve, it too found its place. How do I realistically implement this newly gained wisdom about my future and the now more conscious need of my higher self? How do I implement it tomorrow or even better already today? This too found space.

In addition, the work with other biographies was beneficial to one's own biography. Distance has been gained. Out of one's own narrow role a wider understanding arises through life's diversity and is thus refreshing and moving. Days later I still ask myself: How is Viktor doing? Where might he be in his process? True empathy with the destiny of the other has taken hold deep within my heart. This is a nice feeling which we don't experience very much. Opening up can also create space to be hurt. It is not often that circumstances allow us to open up. Here at the conference, in Claus-Otto Scharmer's «Laboratory», Viktor first encountered his fear. Five of us around a round table, nobody knowing the other. And afterwards we were all touched and Viktor's fear of «opening up» and sharing his personal situation in his small enterprise made way to the delight and enrichment that came through it and opened up new spaces and perspectives through our working together.

Yes, a fresh wind is blowing at the Goetheanum! Again I was confirmed that a crisis, a seemingly dreadful situation, holds so much great potential. If, yes if, the courage can be found to face what is new. If we can let go of the old. If judgements can be freed. If I am able to accept my helplessness and my vulnerability in small steps and if I can show it to myself and others.

I feel that his conference is the beginning of a new era at the Goetheanum. And again it started with the farmers. Back to the roots. Why again with these people, who hold the earth in their hands and who know how to turn muck into gold? Maybe this is the answer to my question: Why is there such a different mood during the Agriculture Conference? Because here people meet who have to face up to muck in everyday life. They are people who know how to transform this side of life. To make something valuable out of stinking muck, new fertile soil in which unfolds what is entailed in the seed. Only, whatever its potential, it may also remain slumbering for hundreds of years if the conditions for its unfolding are not right. Herein I see a great problem for our present time, especially in the anthroposophical scene. There is much light towards which I can turn and in which I myself light up and in which I wallow and find myself confirmed of being on the right path. And there is no better proof than standing in the light in order to take up the tasks of the world and thus to move away

from the shadow and not to meet it. And the above mentioned daily muck for me is a synonym for shadow. This side of us which wants to be turned into gold. But we try and avoid it more than anything else. Are we afraid of our potential?

Working with Claus-Otto Scharmer during the Agriculture Conference, for me showed wonderfully, what clear, direct and really available to everyone techniques and ways there are to discover our potential – always with a loving glance towards the shadow but at the same time with a strong vision. Wonderful work. Claus-Otto Scharmer often reminds me of Steve Jobs with his new apple-creations on stage. With an easy sovereignty, sober vividness and an impressive focus new things are created elegantly and tastefully. And we never knew that we would need them so much. I thank Claus-Otto Scharmer and of course the farmers! Thank you for your connection to Mother Earth and the cherishing the seed of the higher within the lowest!

Sabine Hurwitz is a nutritionist and works in nursing services at the Ita Wegman Klinik.

FORWARD TO THE WELLSPRINGS

Agriculture Section, annual theme 2011/2012

New beginnings featured strongly in our 2011 conference. Like beacons of light, the seeds are now sown for individuals, farms, and indeed the whole biodynamic movement actively to take part. Responsibility for shaping the future of civilisation is increasingly being taken on by people directly affected. We are of course part of this trend because our core business involves modifying the environment based on ‚points of individuation‘ set by real life. Biodynamic farms are wellsprings of change for the social life around them and for the natural surroundings. Put another way, the source of this change is the individual and their community, i.e. people who are actually working right now to further biodynamics in their particular locality.

What is essential in biodynamic agriculture? What is at the heart of my engagement with biodynamics? What is the most essential thing about biodynamics for each of us? Is it the possibility of healing a piece of the Earth, or the chance to produce healthy food for consumers? Is it the intimacy of being able to farm according to one’s very own aims and intuitions? Or could it be our fascination with being able to intervene in natural systems with ‚spirituality‘, for example through careful work on the preparations? Is it a deep love of the Earth and the natural world which support and nourish us? Or is the driving force our being socio-politically engaged in an honest primary industry that is a basis for healthy communities? Is it the Earth or the human being that is at the centre of this? What do we really mean by ‚cosmic forces‘? Are cows and horns just symbols, or are they the essential parts of the reality on our farms? Is the ‚individuality of the farm‘ an idea to be realised only in the distant future, or is it already a spiritual reality in the present time? Is the statement in the Agriculture Course ‚Man is the foundation‘ to be taken just metaphorically, or is it a guide to action?

New inward beginnings We think that these new inward beginnings for the wellsprings of our work together represent the next step that we should take in a more earnest way. We

envisage that, in many places in the world, biodynamic groups will meet and work on the wellsprings of biodynamic agriculture, using the established forms of dialogue facilitation that we were getting acquainted with at the Agriculture Conference 2011, such as Dialogue Interview, World Café, Case Clinic, and Dialogue Walk-through. Each person is asked to look for the connection between their own aims in life and our movement towards farming for the future, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner in his Agriculture Course. Actively listening in conversations with others, or even a quiet hour alone, creates a space in everyday life where what is essential can become clear. In the agriculture conference in 2012 we shall be able to consolidate the points raised, bring order to their diversity and create an overall picture. We intend to achieve this with the help of extended forms of dialogue, only this time focusing more strongly on the content, firmly supported by a greater number of individual contributions in the form of stimulating presentations, as well as reports of personal experiences. The aim is for us all to arrive at a formulation of the essentials of biodynamic farming principles that truly reflects the present time.

The cosmopolitan dimension of biodynamic agriculture This leads us to an overview of a triennial period of work. After the 2011 conference, and by thinking about what is essential in the run up to and during the coming conference in 2012, we can envisage the 2013 conference taking a wholly outward perspective and seeking contact with people, organisations and movements related to ours. This challenge would then involve bringing in our specific initiatives through personal contacts, regional partnerships and global networks. This opening up to global responsibility has of course already been discussed in our 2011 conference. Biodynamic principles also have a cosmopolitan dimension and we are confident that we shall succeed in growing and maturing in the next two years sufficiently to be able to present it in a fruitful way during the 21st century – a time of new beginnings.

Practical involvement with the theme for the year

Distributing, translating and copying this document which formulates and sets the theme for the year. >>> Taking up the resurgent mood of the 2011 conference right now, and, with this impetus, addressing the question as to what is the most essential. To make this relevant to the current situation we will not rely on inspiration that comes solely from the past, but also above all from the future. What are we facing in the future? >>> Further developing the Beacons of Light Project arising from the 2011 conference, if possible in connection with the theme for this year. >>> Using every opportunity to examine what is essential, whether individually or in conversations and conferences. In the summer letter, we hope to be able to present additional tools for working on the theme in dialogue form. >>> Amongst the many aspects of this theme is a systematic one: can we produce a list of biodynamic principles that is as brief as possible but comprehensive? Can these principles then form the basis for Demeter guidelines? >>> The next Michael letter is connected with the theme for the year. It is the letter of 8 February entitled Sleeping and waking in the light of recent studies, together with the Leading Thoughts numbers 156 to 158.

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FUTURE WORKSHOP AGRICULTURE

FROM BURNING ISSUES TO BEACONS OF LIGHT

This was the title of the Annual Conference of the Section for Agriculture in February 2011 at the Goetheanum. This issue reports in detail on the groundbreaking conference where new forms for the search for knowledge and the mobilization of the will were developed. This issue replaces the conference reports from the Section for Agriculture. Readers of the Goetheanum are herewith given the opportunity to make themselves familiar with a vital area of Anthroposophy and its questions relevant in our time. All photos are by Wolfgang Held. More pictures and links: www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org