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The Spiritual '1968'

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ABSTRACT

The year 1968 is often seen as a synonym for the cultural and political rebellion in North America and Western Europe that reaches back into the 1960s and forward into the 1970s. In Denmark, this was a period which was emphatically opposed to the church. However, there was a search for spirituality at that time which has been eclipsed by the political dimension of the events and changes in Denmark around '1968'. The kind of spirituality of that time can be exemplified by a widespread cultivation of foreign, often Far Eastern religions, psychic techniques and mystical visions. This chapter argues that it makes sense to talk about a spiritual '1968' by analysing the ideas (and less extensively) the practices of two Danish rebels, known to the public at the time, namely Ebbe Kløvedal Reich (1940-2005) and Ole Grünbaum (1945). Among other things, the analysis will show that ideas on how to change society influenced how they were thinking, and partly how they were practising, their alternative spiritual, religious beliefs. The starting point for the analysis is the year 1972 when the two rebels, who had also been friends, broke up their friendship as a consequence of disagreements on spiritual matters and on what was at that time seen as the connection between the revolution of the internal world and the revolution of the external world.

I årene omkring det symbolmættede årstal '1968' i Danmark var der i dele af de miljøer, som tegner det, der i dansk sammenhæng benævnes som et ungdomsoprør, en åndelig, religiøs søgen, som ikke hidtil har været genstand for megen opmærksomhed, hverken i forskningen eller i offentligheden. Den åndelige, religiøse søgen gav sig blandt andet til kende i dyrkelsen af fremmede, ofte fjernøstlige trosformer, psykiske teknikker og mystiske visioner, og den var blandt andet, men ikke kun, en følge af de mange eksperimenter med bevidsthedsudvidende stoffer, såsom hash, meskalin og LSD, der udfoldede sig i dele af de danske ungdomsoprørsmiljøer. Artiklen forsøger at kaste lys over forbindelsen mellem den åndelige, religiøse søgen i tiden ved at argumentere for, at det er meningsfuldt at tale om et åndeligt '1968', som stod i forbindelse med det politiske '1968'. Artiklen tager udgangspunkt i en analyse af nogle af de åndelige, religiøse forestillinger, som de to danske ungdomsoprørere Ebbe Kløvedal Reich (1940-2005) og Ole Grünbaum (1945) formulerede i

offentligheden i perioden. Udgangspunktet for analysen er det brud, der skete mellem de to venner i 1972. På det tidspunkt bekendte Ebbe Kløvedal Reich sig til sin helt egensindige udgave af den protestantiske kristentro, hvor der også var plads til astrologi, djævetilbedelse og brug af I-Ching. Ole Grünbaum derimod tilsluttede sig bevægelsen "The Divine Light Mission" og dens i 1972 14-årige leder Guru Maharaj Ji, og han flyttede i en ashram, et religiøst kollektiv efter indisk forbillede. Analysen her viser blandt andet, at forestillinger om samfundsforandring var virksomme for måden, som de to oprørere formulerede deres åndelige, religiøse forestillinger på. Ydermere viser den, at begge oprørere talte sig ind i den samtidige opfattelse af forholdet mellem henholdsvis 'den indre' og 'den ydre revolution', som knytter an til periodens to idealtypiske oprørere, nemlig hippien og den politiske radikalist. Artiklen konkluderer blandt andet, at analysen af Ebbe Kløvedal Reichs og Ole Grünbaums åndelige, religiøse søgen i 1970erne er med til at udfordre den dominerende grundfortælling om ungdomsoprørets konjunkturforløb, som udpeger 1970erne til årtiet, hvor alle 1960ernes livsstilseksperimenter og åbne muligheder blev lukket ned, fordi alt stivnede i politisk radikaliserings. Men den peger også på, at en mere tilbundsående analyse af det åndelige '68' vil kunne nuancere ikke bare denne konjunkturfortælling, men i det hele taget opfattelsen af, hvad '1968' var for et fænomen.

INTRODUCTION

The year 1968 is often seen as synonymous with a cultural and political rebellion in North America and Western Europe¹ that reaches from the 1960s and into the 1970s. In Denmark, this was a period which was emphatically opposed to the church. However, there was a search for spirituality which up until now has been eclipsed by the political dimension of the events and changes around '1968' in Denmark². What I here refer to as a search for spirituality may be exemplified by a cultivation of foreign, often Far Eastern religions, psychic techniques and mystical visions, but it is a phenomenon which is difficult both to define and to investigate. Traditional methods of gathering information, such as counting churches or membership lists, are inappropriate for the looser, more personal, non-institutionalised forms of spirituality seen in contemporary society³. This is why, in this chapter, I am going to analyse the ideas and (less extensively) the practices of two Danish rebels, namely Ebbe Kløvedal Reich (1940-2005) and Ole Grünbaum (1945), as a means to investigate the varied and rather confused field of spirituality of the 1960s and 1970s in Denmark, asking if there is a connection between the spirituality of the time and the contemporaneous youth rebellion⁴.

The inclination towards alternative religious beliefs in the 1960s was for many, but certainly not for all, a result of having experimented with so-called consciousness-expanding drugs. Many who had taken such drugs experienced supernatural visions, which changed their perspective on reality fundamentally. Some became religious seekers⁵. However, the alternative religious field that flourished in the 1960s and 1970s cannot

be seen solely as a result of either the drug culture or, for that matter, the youth rebellion. The search for alternative spirituality is a far-reaching phenomenon in time as well as in complexity. To what extent can this search be explained as a phenomenon of rebellion? Was it only a matter of simultaneous but unconnected events when the search for alternative religious beliefs arose at the same time as the youth rebellion? Is it fruitful to see the spiritual search as somehow connected with elements of the youth rebellion? The main argument in this chapter is that there seems to have been a Spiritual '1968', which to some extent is connected with the Political '1968'.

The object of analysis is on spiritual and religious matters by two youth rebels, Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum. It will among other things show that their ideas on how to change the society influenced how they were thinking and partly how they practised their alternative spiritual, religious beliefs. But firstly, I will introduce the prevalent interpretation in Danish research on the youth rebellion, which is seen as a rebellion divided between what has been called political radicalism and lifestyle radicalism. Secondly, I will – very briefly – introduce the field of religion and religious beliefs in the Denmark of the 1960s and 1970s. And thirdly, as already mentioned, I will examine the spiritual ideas and practices of Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum.

THE DANISH YOUTH REBELLION

1968, youth rebellion, student rebellion, political radicalism and lifestyle radicalism are some of the labels that are being used in the still rather sparse research on the cultural and political upheavals in Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s⁶. The British historian Arthur Marwick has on the basis of a comparative analysis of the course of events in Great Britain, France, Italy and the United States, introduced the term “the long sixties”. This indicates a Cultural Revolution that he suggests took place more or less simultaneously in a number of Western countries from c. 1958 to c. 1974. Marwick's interpretation has influenced the Danish research on '1968'.

According to the prevalent Danish interpretation a broad youth culture movement, starting out in the late 1950s, in 1967-1968 was replaced by a more pronounced counterculture, which subsequently went through a process of political radicalisation and elimination of the aspects of lifestyle radicalism⁷. The interpretation is confirmed by Danish youth rebels themselves: at the beginning of the 1970s a narrative emerged. It was the story of an era of openness, creativity, fantasy and possibilities that died out with the late 1960s and was replaced by political dogmatism, expressed by a number of small but thriving political groups.

This interpretation tells the story of a rebellion in decline, and expresses a feeling which seems to have been prevalent among the youth rebels at the time: that valuable possibilities were lost as the decades shifted from the 1960s to the 1970s. The shift between the decades has been called a shift from “Hedonism to Leninism”⁸, which confirms that

political radicalism was replacing lifestyle radicalism as the core element of the rebellion. However, there seem to be many events and elements of the time that do not quite fit into this narrative on the conjunction of '1968'. The search for spirituality is one example of this, which I will return to at the end of this chapter⁹.

The dichotomization of the rebellion into political radicalism on the one hand, and lifestyle radicalism on the other, is echoed by two different kinds of protesters seen as distinctive both at the time and in subsequent research, namely the political radical and the hippie. As suggested by the Danish historian, Henrik Jensen, it is most likely that the vast majority of protesters were constantly crossing the borderline between these two positions or ideal types¹⁰. However, the mere existence of the two ideal types suggests that the youth rebels were not in agreement on how the rebellion should proceed or by which means.

In the Danish youth magazine "Superlove", one of the rebels, Ole Vind (1944), described the conflicting positions as follows: "Love or violence, beat music or cobble stones, chillum or gun, flower children or guerrilla soldiers, chaos or cadre, Jesus or Marx –in this parodical form everyone will recognize the theme behind the quarrel that now and then breaks out within the youth rebellion"¹¹. In an extreme way the quote exposes the conflicting views on the concept of rebellion, and not least the disagreement on the means by which established society and the human beings who belong to it should be altered. The Danish historian, Anette Warring, has exemplified the differences by saying that while some youth rebels thought that liberation was to be found in struggles against capitalism and in a revolutionary way of living, others thought that it was through therapy and 'New Age collectives'¹².

In other words the disputes among the youth rebels concerned the relationship between the revolution of 'the inner world' and the revolution of 'the outer world'. There was a tension between those who believed in political radicalisation as the means of revolution and those who thought that a radicalization of the lifestyle and everyday life was essential to make profound changes. I will show how the ideas on the inner and the outer revolution influenced the way the two youth rebels, Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum, expressed their thoughts on spiritual and religious beliefs.

RELIGION IN DENMARK IN THE 1960S AND 1970S

Danish society was until recently a mono-religious society, but in these years was facing a new situation of pluralism in both religion and culture¹³. The reason that Denmark was a mono-religious society for a great many years may be explained by (among other things) the founding of a national church alongside the modern nation state of Denmark. In 1849, when freedom of religion was stated in the country's first so-called democratic constitution, it was decided that one religious community in Denmark, the Evangelical-Lutheran church, would have a special status among the religious communities¹⁴. This

meant that the Danish church – *Folkekirken* [the Church of the People] – came to be the dominating church in Denmark. The power of the church in the secular world was however very limited as the church at the same time had to transfer most of its possessions to the State. In general, Danish society of the modern period from around 1849 may be characterized as a highly secularized society, with regard to institutions, norms and values. Church and state are divided and religious beliefs are generally seen as part of the private realm and not as part of public life. Seen in this perspective, it is surprising that a renewed interest in spirituality and religious beliefs took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Why this was the case, and how one should characterise the search for alternative religions and spirituality at the time, are questions that have not yet been addressed in the literature on '1968', nor in literature dealing with religion and related issues¹⁵.

The vast majority of the Danish population of the 1960s and 1970s were members of the Danish church, which however at the same time was challenged by critics from the outside as well as inside the church itself¹⁶, and the number of members of the church was in decline. In order to become a member of the church one had to be baptised, but at the beginning of the 1970s the number of children that were not baptised was increasing. At the same time the number of people leaving the church was rising¹⁷. Whether this was a direct consequence of the flourishing of new, alternative religions is hard to tell; most likely it had to do with several different factors, among which probably there was the widespread political radicalisation of Danish society from the 1970s.

TWO YOUTH REBELS

The youth rebels Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum were both part of that relatively small group of protesters who came to represent the youth rebellion in public life. The question of how to demarcate and define the youth rebellion as both an event and a phenomenon is not an easy problem to solve. I am operating with both a narrow and a broad definition.

The narrow definition is tied to the activities of a relatively small group of rebels who were ideological in the sense that they were somehow conscious of bringing their ideas on how to make social changes out into public space, most often through the written word or public happenings or theatre. The narrow definition at the same time defines what 'youth rebel' stands for. The typical youth rebels, in the narrow definition, were politically conscious people – and by 'political' I refer to a broad understanding of the word, implicating both traditional politics and radical experiments with lifestyles. Furthermore, the rebels consisted of many intellectuals, artists and politicians. I find that Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum belong to this rather small group of protesters.

The broad definition of the youth rebellion is broad in the sense both of the time-span and of the number of people involved in it. It is a definition that follows Arthur Marwick's "long sixties", indicating a blooming of youth culture from the late 1950s,

ending in the economic crisis of the 1970s. The broad definition includes the activities of people participating in the marches against nuclear weapons in the early 1960s, the Vietnam War demonstrations in the late 1960s, and the many summer camps in the 1970s – for instance those arranged by *Det ny Samfund* [The New Society], which was an active milieu in the youth rebellion, or by the Women's and Men's Movements.

The vast majority of people attending these activities did probably not consider themselves to be youth rebels, although they probably had some sympathy with the rebellion, or at least parts of it. In other words, the vast majority of the activists in the broad definition were people who despite having ideas on social change lived 'ordinary' lives, studying or working. Some of them may have moved into a commune at the end of the 1960s or in the 1970s, but they somehow lived 'ordinary' lives. From the perspective of the broad definition of the youth rebellion in Denmark, the general idea that it implicated 'young people', and therefore was a generational thing, is being challenged. But that is another story.

Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum are often mentioned in books and articles that present popular narratives on the youth rebellion¹⁸, but strangely their ideas on spirituality and religious beliefs are very seldom mentioned in these books. This I find surprising because they both expressed a very sincere engagement in the religious field in the 1960s and 1970s, and in that sense they serve as very distinctive examples of the search for spirituality, found in some of the milieus of the youth rebellion. The two were friends, but in 1972 they had a serious confrontation, after which they stopped seeing each other. From that time they only met accidentally. In 1972 Ebbe Kløvedal Reich published a devotional, historical biography, called *Frederik*, on the clergyman and psalm poet Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872).

Books on Grundtvig flourished that year. It was the anniversary of his death and he had played a very influential role in the development of Danish church in the founding years as well as in the construction of national identity in the 19th century. Reich's book was a sensation in the sense that he saw the historical Grundtvig through the prism of some of the central ideas of the youth rebellion, such as sexual liberation and the relation between normality and insanity. The book on Grundtvig is also significant with regard to Reich's personal life. It may be seen as a kind of indirect commitment to Danish Lutheranism, a commitment he had begun to be conscious of from the beginning of the 1970s¹⁹.

1972 is also the year when Ole Grünbaum decided to move into an ashram, a religious commune inspired by the traditional religious practices of India. Grünbaum committed himself to the movement "The Divine Light Mission", which had become famous in the beginning of the 1970s, not at least because of the leader, a 14-year old guru by the name of Maharaj Ji. The meaning of the word 'guru' is essential to understand how Kløvedal Reich reacted towards the news that Grünbaum was going to join one of the

ashrams of the movement. According to Grünbaum, Kløvedal Reich remarked: "You may have found The Light. But my solidarity belongs to those in The Dark. I will be the last one to follow The Light"²⁰. It might seem a rather cryptic response, but a significant one, in order to understand the nature of their disagreement on religious and spiritual matters. It seems that not only did they disagree on where the struggle should take place – was it going to be in The Light or in The Dark? – but on the object of the struggle, too. For whom were they fighting? Were they fighting for themselves, or for the suppressed? What kind of changes did they want? The disagreement between the two raises the question of whether they thought the revolution in the outer world was important. Did they rather perceive social changes as coming from the individual and a revolution of the inner world? These are some of the questions for which we seek answers in the following. But first, I should like to give a short introduction to the life and works of Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum.

As mentioned above, the two belonged to a relatively small group of rebels which was well known in the public. Both of them must be considered as 'characters', but in addition to this they also represent general positions in the youth rebellion. They were both intellectuals, they had been writing articles for newspapers and magazines and publishing several books since the first half of the 1960s²¹. They saw themselves as youth rebels and both tried to formulate thoughts on how society ought to change. Although both can be characterised as exponents of utopian thoughts on how to make profound changes in society in the 1960s, they were significantly different in their engagement in the rebellion. In the 1960s Grünbaum was first and foremost known as a 'provo', having the Dutch provo movement as a model. 'Provo' was a way of challenging traditional politics by using public happening as a protest form, bringing the protest out in public space. One happening in particular had made Grünbaum famous. It was when Grünbaum and Jaspas Groovaldt, a well-known character of the Dutch Movement, washed an American car while naked, in the dark and cold wintery streets of Copenhagen. The happening received a lot of attention from the public, not least because Grünbaum was a son of the Minister of Finance at that time, the social democrat Henry Grünbaum. In connection with this involvement, Grünbaum published the books *Provokér!* [Provoke!] in 1967 and *Emigrér!* [Emigrate!] in 1968. He was momentarily engaged in *Studentersamfundet* [the Students Society], but apart from this was not political in any traditional sense of the word.

Kløvedal Reich, who was from a rather traditional political culture, had a different story. He stood for Parliament for the social-liberal party *Det radikale Venstre* [The Radical Left] in 1966 and 1968, representing the party's extreme left. At the same time, Kløvedal Reich was committed to what has been referred to as the New Left, which describes the part of the political left that from the late 1950s and up through the 1960s defined itself in opposition to the old, Communist-dominated left²². One of the milieus representing the New Left in the Danish youth rebellion was that around

the magazine “Politisk Revy” [Political Revue]. Reich worked there as a writer (as did Ole Grünbaum, by the way), and was an editor of the magazine for about a year. While working at the “Politisk Revy”, Reich became intensely involved in the struggles against the Vietnam War, helping organize the International Russell Tribunal in Denmark in 1967, which was an effort to document war crimes in Vietnam by the Americans.

Today Reich is perhaps best remembered for two things in relation to the youth rebellion, both of which stress a lifestyle-radical engagement than a political engagement: first, for his membership in the commune *Maos Lyst* [Mao’s Pleasure]. This was a commune well-known to the public, because all of the members took the name *Kløvedal*, the Danish translation of Rivendale in the trilogy *Lord of the Rings* by the English professor J.R.R. Tolkien (translated in 1969). Secondly, for a happening in 1970, where he, in the company of other well-known personalities and intellectuals, smoked hashish on the stairs of the Ministry of Culture. This action was intended as a protest against the closing of a small experimental theatre named “Secret Service”. It had been closed because a politician, while attending a performance, had learned that people in the audience were smoking hashish. The message of the happening in which Reich was involved was that the theatre could not be held responsible for people smoking of hashish, just as the Ministry of Culture could not be held responsible for the happening. But this message did not get through.

The happening took place at a time when the issue of legalization of cannabis had led to a large demonstration in the streets of Copenhagen. And this, of course, led to the general assumption that Reich and his fellow activists were advocating that message. Reich was already known as an active supporter of the legalization of cannabis. He did not conceal being a daily smoker of cannabis, nor did he hide that he had experimented with stronger consciousness-expanding drugs, such as LSD. Reich even wrote articles about the consciousness-expanding drugs during his time as a writer and editor of “Politisk Revy”, which was a bit unusual in a magazine known for serious political analyses. Actually, it was Ole Grünbaum who introduced Reich to LSD as early as in 1965 (LSD did not become widespread and popular among Danish youth until the summer of 1967). Reich and Grünbaum used LSD together several times in the late 1960s. The experiment with LSD was the beginning of a search for spirituality for both of them. Retrospectively, Reich even claimed that it was not a sacramental wafer, but a LSD-trip that made him a Christian²³. Whether or not this is the whole story, it is quite clear, that Reich did not become a Christian in any traditional sense of the word, which leads to the question of what beliefs the two youth rebels held around 1972 and kind of practices corresponded to them.

GRUNDTVIG, I-CHING AND ASTROLOGY

While acknowledging that Ebbe Kløvedal Reich declared himself a Christian, more specifically as adhering to Danish Lutheranism and the Danish church, it is far from easy actually to define what beliefs he adhered to in the 1970s.

Reich tried to raise what he called “a debate on the church” in 3 articles in the left-wing newspaper “Information” in January and February 1971²⁴. Among other things, he blamed the church for not having any visions and clear opinions on life as such. He was critical toward the fact that the Danish church, when converting to Protestantism in the 16th century, had eliminated Satan as a prominent figure of spiritual power, even though ‘the founding father’ of Lutheranism, Luther himself, had seen devils everywhere. In Reich’s opinion this had removed the basis of what he called “the mystical experience”. Furthermore, he criticised the fact that Christianity historically had been formulated as a male tradition with the “Great Father” in command. It is quite clear, both from reading these articles and from reading the book *Frederik on Grundtvig*, that Reich had his own personal interpretation of Christianity, and that it was an interpretation that was able to contain mysticism, the Worship of the Devil, Astrology and I-Ching.

What was to be most essential in the way Reich understood himself as a Christian, was the historical connection between the Danish church and the nation state of Denmark because this in Reich’s view created a community for the Danish people. The combination of tradition, community, Danish national identity and spirituality are elements that run through Reich’s political engagement in the 1970s. In that decade he was strongly committed to the national struggles against Danish membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) in *Folkebevægelsen mod EF* [The Peoples’ Movement against EEC]. This marks a significant break away from his engagement in international issues of the 1960s, such as the Vietnam War and the Third World. The way Reich explicitly formulated his ideas on Christianity shows that the issue of changing society played a very significant role in how he perceived his spiritual, religious commitment. In the partly autobiographical book *Svampen og Korset* [The Mushroom and the Cross] from 1974, which contains of a variety of articles written by Reich roughly within the preceding three or four years, Reich confronts the reader with information on what he describes as a personal psychological crisis. As he describes it, it took place at the end of 1970 and the beginning of 1971, and he had tried to solve it by looking for “the most real” in life. This meant, he writes, that he began his search in the field of spirituality and religious beliefs. With reference to the religious field as a place of “reality”, Reich challenged the prevailing political assumption on the Left in the 1970s that everything could (and should) be explained by material structures of social and economical origin. Reich relates that he soon came to realize that his attempts to shake up the church had not been successful. He realized that the church was not a place where important fights take place: the church turned out to be insignificant, meaning nothing important in Danish society. Recognizing this, he writes, he again turned to the political field. But this time with a bad conscience, because he had been away from politics:

A few years ago I had had the opinion that ‘the political’ – understood so far and indeterminate as the inverted commas suggest – was the most real that could be found. Now this opinion returned in the shape of bad conscience. At that time I now and then had achieved

some sensible and practical activities (such as writing addresses on envelopes, hanging up posters and organizing in general). And as earlier mentioned, a war was still going on in Vietnam, and it had not become less cruel or imperialistic since I had achieved something. And after this, conscious and hard working activists had carried out large and multifaceted work, while I was sitting fumbling with my mysticism²⁵.

This quote might leave the impression that Reich after thus clarifying his crisis of belief decided to turn his back on the religious commitment as such. But examining his life and work through the 1970s and up until to his death in 2005, it becomes evident that this was not the case at all. From the publishing of the book on Grundtvig in 1972 on, Reich was often invited to speak in Christian milieus. But as the quote indicates, he was not able to live out a religious engagement without the political engagement also present.

FOLLOWING A GURU

The search for spirituality was in the case of Ole Grünbaum significantly different. First of all, just as Grünbaum did not regard The Divine Light Mission as a form of religious movement, neither did he consider himself to be religious. From his point of view, the qualities of the 14-year-old guru leading the movement were the guru's ability to convey what he called "The Knowledge" and furthermore the guru's ability to teach some quite elementary techniques of meditation, which provided an opportunity to look inside oneself. Guru Maharaj Ji toured the West in the beginning of the 1970s. Prior to his visit to Copenhagen in the late summer of 1972, Grünbaum wrote a feature for the newspaper, "Politiken", where he tried to explain the significance and importance of the movement, as he tried to explain what the guru's meditation techniques were all about. Grünbaum claimed that everybody could learn the four techniques that the meditation of the guru was consisted of, and that they could be learned in less than half an hour.

Using the guru's techniques one could learn to see, hear, feel and taste inwards, within oneself instead of outwards. Grünbaum explained this experience in the following way:

You are having 'the third' eye opened and with your eyes shut you will see a light stronger and more dazzling than any light outside [...]. With your ears shut you will hear a music that comes from the inside. You will taste without having anything in your mouth, a taste that you have inside yourself. And you are feeling and hearing a vibration inside yourself²⁶.

In Grünbaum's understanding this was an experience of "The Force of Life" itself, that is the force which according to Grünbaum is the lifeblood of everything. He argued that the meditation reveals:

...the Force that repeatedly forces breathing. It is the Force that keeps us alive. That keeps everything alive. It is the Force that creates humans, plants, suns and planets. Some peoples call it God, others call it Cosmic Consciousness, others again are just saying the Force of Life and you can also call it The Original Self, The Universe – the Chinese are saying Tao, The Indies Atman, The Danes the Soul. But it is the same that is referred to²⁷.

In the eyes of Ole Grünbaum meditation was a completely practical technique that neither demanded gymnastic exercises nor the ability to control breathing. Grünbaum's comments on the relevance of meditation were, interestingly enough, tied to the ability of The Knowledge to solve problems in relation to major issues of the World, because The Knowledge according to Grünbaum: "... can bring Peace to this World. It can end wars and exploitation. It is the only thing that can make all people equal"²⁸.

The way Grünbaum expresses his belief in The Knowledge as a sort of peacemaker for the world is significantly utopian, and does not contain any concrete reflections on how this should be achieved in relation to specific issues and problems in the world. In the book *Guru Maharaj Ji – vejen til fred og frihed* [Guru Maharaj Ji – the Path of Peace and Freedom], published in 1974 and serving as an introduction to the guru and to the Divine Light Mission movement, Grünbaum argued how societal changes in his opinion could happen. Such changes could not happen without people changing themselves too:

It is not possible to move from 'a revolution of the external world' to 'an internal' one. If my mind does not change, I shall never be able to express anything different 'in the external', only something presumably different. On the other hand when my mind changes, then, in one fell swoop, everything I do is different. Maybe not by big gestures, but everything is changed because it is done by love and not by egoism²⁹.

Ole Grünbaum believed that following the guru Maharaj Ji could make profound changes, not just inside the individual but also in the world as such. It was his argument that changes ought to begin with the individual and the acts of the individual. This explains why it was not necessary to specify how The Knowledge might act as a peacemaker. The logic appears to be that the process would evolve and proceed by itself with more and more people converting to the movement, thereby changing their 'internal world'.

CONCLUSION

As specimens of the Spiritual '1968', Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum are not typical. They were writers and thus well-known to the public. But still they represent some key aspects of the search for spirituality in the 1960s and 1970s as a kind of rebellion, as they both entertained an idea of changing, not just yourself but the world as such, as a key element of their thinking. It is striking that reflections on societal changes structured the way both of them expressed their ideas on spirituality. Furthermore, I find it notable that their writings on spirituality reflect the two main positions of the youth rebellion: namely, on the one hand, the outgoing political activist, who was mainly concerned with changing the external world, and on the other hand, the introvert hippie who thought that the way to make changes goes through self-exploration and changes in inner life.

As earlier mentioned, it has been suggested that a vast majority of those involved in some way in the youth rebellion probably contained elements of both tendencies,

which means that a vast majority of protesters were migrants, moving back and forth between the two ideal typical positions. And I think this is also true of Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum. Reich chose to engage with political issues in the 1970s, but this happened simultaneously with a commitment to his own version of Protestantism, highly influenced by key values of the 1960s rebellion. While Reich politicised his religious beliefs in public, Ole Grünbaum withdrew from public life when he moved into an ashram and stayed here for the next ten years. His choice was an introverted response to the longing for change and indeed an individualistic act. But as shown above, Grünbaum's ideas on altering the individual self were closely linked to ideas on creating a better world, resting upon the thought that any hope for changes and for a better future had to begin with the single human being. Furthermore, it is worth noticing that what seems to be total absorption in his own inner world actually took place in a commune, that is to say in a collective environment. This is a circumstance that gives both light and shadow to the argument that Grünbaum's way of life in this period was a purely individualistic and selfish project. It was, but not solely. The example of Grünbaum and his life in the 1970s is of course a radical as well as a marginal one. Not many people made such resolute decisions as did Ole Grünbaum. Here it seems that Reich's search for spiritual, religious meaning much better represents something that was mainstream in time, namely an individualistic way of combining one's personal ideas, as Reich did by combining elements of Grundtvig, Protestantism, I-Ching and Astrology. Reich's system of belief had its roots in the Danish tradition of Christianity, but at the same time it was mixed with elements deriving from different, primarily Eastern practices and beliefs.

When examining the search for spirituality by Ebbe Kløvedal Reich and Ole Grünbaum in these years of youth rebellion, the dominant narrative developed during the period itself as well as in later research – a narrative, which designates the 1970s as the decade of extreme political radicalisation, when all the experiments of living differently had been abandoned – is challenged. Only a more thorough analysis of the Spiritual '1968', than this chapter after all is able to demonstrate, might qualify the knowledge and understanding of what the rebellion in the years around '1968' was all about.

NOTES

- ¹ There are also examples of rebellion against established society in several eastern European countries in the 1960s, see for instance M. Klimke, J. Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe*, New York 2008. The book presents protest stories from several countries in Europe among these East-European countries as Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany. In this chapter however, the general use of the term '1968' refers to the rebellion in the Western countries only.
- ² Youth rebellion will in this chapter be used synonymously with '1968' since youth rebellion is the most commonly used term in Danish historiography to describe the cultural and political rebellion of the 1960s and 1970s.
- ³ M. Bowman, S. Sutcliffe (eds.), *Beyond New Age. Exploring Alternative Spirituality*, Edinburgh 2000, p. 3.

- ⁴ In this chapter I am deliberately avoiding use of the concept of New Age, though it is a concept of that time, indicating the Age of Aquarius that according to astrological beliefs was to begin in the 1970s, ending an age of conflict and starting an age of peace. The label New Age is, as researchers in alternative spirituality Marion Bowman and Steven Sutcliffe say, used to cover everything from well-established New Religious Movements to recent developments in specific religions, which often mean that the differences between the different kinds of religiosity that the label has sought to identify has been overlooked. Instead I am using, partly inspired by Bowman and Sutcliffe, the terms of search for 'spirituality', 'alternative spirituality', 'alternative religions' and 'spirituality and religious beliefs', which are terms that I am using as synonyms. These terms are perhaps loose but at the same time they are more neutral than the term New Age, in the sense that they do not point to a specific content in advance, apart from the expression 'alternative', which suggest that the phenomenon looked upon varies from the practices of the majority in a specific culture. See Bowman, Sutcliffe (eds.), *Beyond* cit., pp. 1-13.
- ⁵ On experiences of supernatural visions as a result of having taken consciousness-expanding drugs, see for instance J. Munkebo, *Fri Hash – derfor!*, Copenhagen 1969, p. 65 f; K. Eskelund, *Midt i en hashetid*, Odense 1969, p. 20 f; O. Nydahl, *Når jernfuglen flyver*, Copenhagen 1983, p. 8 f; O. Grünbaum, *Bar røv i 60'erne*, Copenhagen 2003; E.K. Reich, *Svampen og korset*, Copenhagen, 1973; Id., *Svaneøglen*, Copenhagen 1978; Id., *Gudsriget tur-retur – forsøg på åndelig statusopgørelse 30 år efter*, in *I svampens bede*, Gylling 2002, pp. 187-198.
- ⁶ The historiographical points on the youth rebellion in Denmark in this chapter are all from A. Warring, *Around 1968. Danish Historiography*, in "Scandinavian Journal of History", 2008, 4.
- ⁷ A. Marwick, *The Sixties. Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958-c.1974*, Oxford 1998. This interpretation is also found in H. Jensen, *Forandringens vinde. 1960erne*, in L. Berntson, G. Hålfdanarson, H. Jensen (eds.), *Europa 1800-2000*, Copenhagen 2003; S.L.B. Jensen, T.E. Jørgensen, *Studenteroprøret i Danmark 1968: Forudsætninger og konsekvenser*, unpublished Masters Thesis in History, University of Copenhagen 1999; S.L.B. Jensen, T.E. Jørgensen, *1968 – og det der fulgte*, Copenhagen 2008.
- ⁸ Jensen, Jørgensen, *Studenteroprøret* cit.
- ⁹ The foundation and the flourishing of the Women's Movement named *Rødstrømpebevægelsen* [The Movement of the Red-Stockings] from 1971 and throughout the 1970s, and the blooming of communes in Denmark in the 1970s (in the 1970s there were about 10,000 communes, with c.100,000 inhabitants, in a country with 5 million inhabitants), are two other distinctive examples of radical experiments on different ways of living, i.e. examples of lifestyle radicalism in the 1970s.
- ¹⁰ Jensen, *Forandringens vinde* cit., p. 370.
- ¹¹ "Superlove", 15 September 1969. This, as are the following translations, is mine (AS). The original Danish quote is: "*Kærlighed eller vold, beatmusik eller brosten, chillum eller gevær, blomsterbørn eller guerillasoldater, kaos eller kadrer, Jesus eller Marx – enhver vil i denne parodierende form genkende temaet bag det mundhuggeri, der undertiden bryder frem indenfor ungdomsoprøret*".
- ¹² Warring, *Changing the world – changing oneself. Danish youth rebels' social criticism and utopianism*, unpublished paper presented at the conference "A New World Coming – The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness", Queen's University, Kingston Ontario, 13-16 June 2007.
- ¹³ V. Mortensen, *Kristendommen under forvandling. Pluralismen som udfordring til teologi og kirke i Danmark*, Gylling 2005, p. 5.
- ¹⁴ This meant – and means even today – that the Church receives economic support from the State and that the Regent of State must be a member of the Church. Since a constitution for the Church never was made it is the Danish Parliament that is the supreme legislative authority of the Church, which means that the clergy are government officials. See M.C.Q. Fibiger, G. Smith, J.P. Sørensen (eds.), *Gads Religionsleksikon*, Copenhagen 1999.

- ¹⁵ In literature dealing with questions that are somehow connected with the multifaceted phenomenon of the New Age, the search for spirituality in the 1960s and 1970s is often mentioned as an early variant of the New Age, though the New Age in itself is most often seen as a contemporary phenomenon, beginning in the early 1980s. But the literature does not provide any empirical analyses of the search for spirituality in the 1960s and 1970s. This still need to be done, among other things it would be interesting to know to what extent the search for spirituality in the 1960s and 1970s in fact can be seen as a part of the New Age. For authors who mention but do not explore the spirituality of the 1960s and 1970s see M. Rothstein, *Er Messias en vandmand? En bog om nye religioner og New Age*, Copenhagen 1993; K.M. Bovbjerg, *Følsomhedens etik. Tilpasning af personligheden i New Age og moderne management*, Bedder 2001.
- ¹⁶ How the challenges were met from the perspective of the church and the theology of the church see V. Mortensen, *Teologi og kritik. Aspekter på halvferdsernes danske teologi*, Gyldendal 1983; J.I. Jensen, A. Pedersen (eds.), *Notater om ungdomsoprør og teologi*, in L. Grane, M.S. Lausten, J. Stenbæk (eds.), *Kirkehistoriske samlinger 1975*, Copenhagen 1975, pp. 173-217.
- ¹⁷ In a register of newspaper articles printed in 1974 on Church-issues, the statistic of the members of the Church in the area of the Danish capital Copenhagen from 1971 to 1973 was referred to. The numbers show that 15.5 % of the children in the area of Copenhagen were not baptised in 1971 and that this number had increased to 21.7 % in 1973. See C. Trock, *1974 – En oversigt*, in Grane, Lausten, Stenbæk (eds.), *Kirkehistoriske cit.*, p. 221 f.
- ¹⁸ See for instance, N. Martinov, *Ungdomsoprøret i Danmark*, Copenhagen 2000.
- ¹⁹ Reich, *Svampen cit.*, p. 70.
- ²⁰ The original Danish quote is: “*Det kan godt være, du har fundet lyset. Men jeg er solidarisk med dem, der er i mørket. Jeg vil være den sidste, der går ind i lyset*”. Grünbaum, *Bar røv cit.*, p. 243.
- ²¹ A selection of the works of Reich before 1972: *Vietnam. Krigen i perspektiv* [Vietnam. The War in perspective], Copenhagen 1965; *Kina – den ideologiske stormagt* [China – The ideological Super-power], Copenhagen 1967; *Svampens tid* [The Age of The Mushroom], Copenhagen 1969. A selection of the works of Grünbaum's before 1972: *Provokér* [Provoke], Copenhagen 1967; *Emigrér* [Emigrate], Copenhagen 1968; *Når jeg bliver statsminister* [When I become Prime Minister], Copenhagen 1970.
- ²² S.H. Rasmussen, *Sære alliancer. Politiske bevægelser i efterkrigstidens Danmark*, Odense 1997, p. 55.
- ²³ Reich, *Svaneøglen cit.*, p. 57.
- ²⁴ The articles are printed in Reich, *Svampen cit.*, pp. 71-94.
- ²⁵ The original Danish quote is: “*For nogle år siden var jeg af den mening, at “det politiske” – forstået så vidt og ubestemt som gåseøjnene antyder – var det mest virkelige, der fandtes. Nu vendte denne mening tilbage i form af dårlig samvittighed. Dengang udrettede jeg nu og da nogle fornuftige og jordnære ting (som adresse-skrivning, plakatoptækning og organisering i al almindelighed). Og der pågik – som sagt – stadig en kamp i Vietnam, og den var ikke blevet mindre grusom og imperialistisk, siden jeg udrettede noget. Og efter det havde bevidste og flittige aktivister gjort et stort og mangesidet arbejde, imens jeg sad og fumlede med min mystik*”. Reich, *Svampen cit.*, p. 110.
- ²⁶ The original Danish quote is: “*Man får åbnet ‘det tredje øje’ og ser med lukkede øjne et lys, der er stærkere og mere blendende end noget lys udenfor [...]. Man bærer med lukkede ører en musik, som kommer indefra. Man smager, uden at få noget ind i munden, en smag, som man har i sig selv. Og man føler og hører en vibration inden i sig selv*”. Grünbaum, “Politiken”, 25 August 1972.
- ²⁷ The original Danish quote is: “*... den kraft, som ustandseligt driver åndedrættet. Det er den kraft, som holder os i live. Som holder alt levende i live. Det er den kraft, som skaber mennesker, planter, sole og planeter. Nogle kalder den Gud, andre kalder den kosmisk bevidsthed, andre igen siger bare livskraften og man kan også kalde den for det Egentlige Selv, Altet – kineserne siger Tao, inderne Atman, danskerne Sjelen. Men det er det samme, der omtales*”. Grünbaum, “Politiken”, 25 August 1972.

- ²⁸ The original Danish quote is: "... kan bringe fred til denne verden. Den kan afslutte krige og udbytning. Den er det eneste, som kan gøre alle mennesker lige". Grünbaum, "Politiken", 25 August 1972.
- ²⁹ The original Danish quote is: "Det er ikke muligt at gå fra en "ydre revolution" til en "indre". Hvis ikke mit sind ændrer sig, så kan jeg aldrig manifestere noget anderledes i det "ydre", højst noget tilsyneladende anderledes. Når derimod mit sind ændres, så bliver med ét slag alt hvad jeg gør anderledes. Måske ikke med store fagter, men alt er alligevel forandret, fordi det er gjort i kærlighed og ikke i egoisme". Grünbaum, *Guru Maharaj Ji – vejen til fred og frihed*, Copenhagen 1974, p. 122.

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