



**Resonance – A Symphony of the Relationship with the World**  
Feel your Tone, Be your Tone and Sound in

Dissertation  
CSPH7068  
MA Ecology and Spirituality

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Staefa, Switzerland, 5 January 2022

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dime,  
y dimelo cantando<sup>1</sup>

tell me,  
and tell me while singing

When we are walking in oracle lands  
A weaver's shuttle held in our hands  
We yearn for the yarn and we follow the braid  
We search for the truth in the cloth as it's made  
Where the wild of the earth meets the wise of the loom  
Where the wild meets the wise in our dreams.

- Carolyn Hillyer<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Puerto Rican worldly wisdom, source unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn Hillyer, *Weavers' Oracle, Journey Cards & Travel Guide* (Postbridge, Devon: Seventh Wave Books, 2016), book cover.

Cover picture: Quint Buchholz: *Giacomond, The Life of the Mystic* [picture]. 1984

<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=54782057>>, edited by Nicole Hoesli [accessed 29 December 2021]

# Resonance – A Symphony of the Relationship with the World

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## Preface

I begin my dissertation with a deep breath and a moment of silence.

I go on with gratitude.

Gratitude to all the elements sustaining life.

Gratitude to the land.

Gratitude to place as community.

Gratitude to all the plurals.

Gratitude to all the ancestral traditions.

Gratitude to my parents, grandparents, my ancestors and all the fire keepers enabling my path.

Gratitude to the ones yet to join us on this beautiful planet.

Gratitude to the opportunity, the motivation, the courage, and the perseverance to immerse myself in the big questions of life.

Gratitude to all the deep encounters with life, love, wisdom, ritual, and mystic.

Gratitude to the Schumacher College and the Trinity Saint David University of Wales, Lampeter to offer the master of my dreams exactly in the right time.

Gratitude to life for showing me this possibility.

Gratitude to the time I could spend in wonderful Devon, the land of my heart.

Gratitude to all the lecturers, especially to my professors Andy Letcher and Nick Campion, to Carolyn Hillyer who took me into a deep journey to Sápmi in 2018 and to Colin Campbell for opening doors to remember through dance, ritual and song and his precious companionship across my vigil on Dartmoor.

Further, I feel deep gratitude to all the enriching encounters with Satish Kumar, Rupert Sheldrake, Greg Cajete, Martin Shaw, Stephan Harding, Philip Franses, Graham Harvey, Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, Pat McCabe, Jonathan Horwitz, Zara Waldeback, Astrid Habiba Kreszmeier, Hans-Peter Hufenus, Denise Rowe, Christopher Titmuss, Jon Young and many more.

Gratitude to my mentors Lindsay Thomson, Eve Annecke and Fiona Tilley and all my dear fellow students Amy, Anat, Andries, Jens, Maria, Nika, Pluma, Steph, Tanja and Yuv just to name a few.

Gratitude to life, in human and more-than-human expression for all their support during this creation process. May it be in form of an amazing book, a new term, a room to rent to write in, a delicious nutritious meal, a hug, encouraging conversations, presence, or an inspiration, an insight, a visit in a dream...

May this work support the healing of our relationship to the world.

## The Authors Perspective to the World

**Tania Hoesli** (\*1983 in Switzerland, lives and works in Switzerland)

Environmental engineer, adult educator, outdoor guide and hiking leader in the Swiss Alps, systemic nature, and aquatic body therapist: traveller and researcher on the road for a beautiful, loving world. Tania is since 2012 self-employed with her company Natoura. She grew up in a socially and ecologically oriented community of 50 families, with strict Catholic grandparents and more religiously neutral parents. At the age of 18, on her first year-long trip to England, she got introduced to the art, beauty, and power of true, deeply felt ritual and prayer at a shamanic sweat lodge ceremony. Her focus on this journey into adulthood was the question *How do I want to live?* The journey taught her a new cosmology, a new perception of and attitude towards life, a different relationship to the world. She remembered her ancestors, the embeddedness of her life in the loving cosmos and she realized that she could build her own house.

After returning to Switzerland, she built a yurt from scratch, wherein she lived for six years. Always deeply fascinated and attracted by animals and especially animal voices she mapped as her diploma thesis grasshopper acoustically to investigate correlations between species diversity and management methods of nature conservation environment zones.

In 2007 she spent several months in Mongolia in the Great Gobi B to research the social interactions of Przewalski's horses on behalf of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna in the Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology.

Tania is convinced of a loving life within the planetary boundaries: at the age of 18, she decided to stop using airplanes for ecological, psychological, and ethical reasons. Ever since she has travelled by land and sea. The question: *What is a good life?* and how she can live such a life motivates her to keep on learning and researching. At the age of 19, she attended her first 10-day Vipassana meditation course, and later she studied for seven years on the initiatory path of an Orixá tradition.

From 2017 to 2021 she studied *Ecology and Spirituality* at the Schumacher College in Devon, England what this dissertation is part of.

As the crickets' soft autumn hum  
is to us  
so are we to the trees  
as are they  
to the rocks and the hills

—Gary Snyder<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> David Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous. Perception And Language In A More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 12.

## The Process of Creation of this Work

After a process over several years of finding my theme, I thought I had found what I was looking for with the book on resonance written by the German sociologist and political scientist Hartmut Rosa. All that remained was to read it. Having managed to finally read it until the last page, the next challenge arose. How can I, in my current state and place of being, respond to a scientific masterpiece of 800 pages? How can I create a dissertation, which truly constitutes an inner process with resonance? A 'masterpiece' in ecology and spirituality that feels real, alive, as well as lived? Again, months of struggling for a sentence and for a paragraph had to pass. I found a structure, but the instance in me was missing, which could easily and totally engage to fill this structure. The structure was outside of me, I could not perceive myself as an author, the reference was missing. So, the core question arose: *How does my dissertation about resonance look like when I fully engage in it?*

Astrid Habiba Kreszmeier emphasizes in her book *Natur-Dialoge* (Nature-Dialogues) that nothing happens without the place we are in.<sup>4</sup> When I write from home today, I look out into a golden autumn. On the large hazel tree outside my window, a great tit, a robin, and a blackbird jump around. Then there is the lake of Zurich, which is a different being depending on the light, wind, and clouds. My feet are placed on a hot water bottle, since outside is only a few degrees. The male seed heads of the hazel are already well developed, a good  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the leaves in bright colours are still on the bush. The shrub will change in my writing time, as will the rest of the environment and myself. Where is this journey going to take us?

I realized that it is necessary to let go of everything, again and again, leaf by leaf. I must immerse myself totally in the process, not knowing who I am going to be after, to encounter the essence of resonance and alienation. I must let go of the illusion of controllability otherwise the relation dies.<sup>5</sup> I must plunge myself in the river with an uncertain outcome. It feels threatening to give up control, to surrender to writing, to the resonance, to aliveness – it is all about trusting the process, to open myself to the moment and allow vulnerability to be present.

*“What the caterpillar calls the end of the world,  
the rest of the world calls butterfly.”<sup>6</sup>*

It is necessary for this dissertation to get written, not by me, but through me. I cannot write it out there. This work writes itself inside of me. In dance, in song, in craft, in ritual, in love, in nature, in prayer – in stillness. These are the moments where I feel the web of existence, where I feel life sustaining me in the midst of the sixth mass extinction of the earth<sup>7</sup>. These are the moments where I can stay with the trouble and showing up to life vulnerable, touchable and in resonance.

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<sup>4</sup> Astrid H. Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge. Der Sympoietische Ansatz In Therapie, Beratung Und Pädagogik* (Heidelberg: Carl-Auer Verlag, 2021), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World* (Cambridge & Medford: Polity Press, 2020), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> source unknown

<sup>7</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble. Making Kin In The Chthulucene* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 4.

*“For me, writing is an act of reciprocity with the world; it is what I can give back in return for everything that has been given to me.”<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass. Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, And The Teachings Of Plants* (Canada: Milkweed Editions, 2013), p. 152.

## Abstract

The crisis we face is a crisis of our relationship to life and death<sup>9</sup> – to the world<sup>10</sup>, a crisis of our values and the stories we base our society on<sup>11</sup> and a crisis of multispecies response-ability (a term coined by Haraway<sup>12</sup>). The world is silencing.<sup>13</sup> The Heart and the Mind are deadening.<sup>14</sup> The Earth dementia is spreading.<sup>15</sup> Based on the work of different authors this dissertation examines if and why this is the case. Grounded in Hartmut Rosa's resonance theory, his sociology of our relationship to the world, where resonance is defined as a strictly relational term to describe qualities of relationships, I access with a literary work how we, the late modern subjects, relate and resonate to the world.

Further I research what the more organic, earthy *compostists perspective* (a term coined by D. J. Haraway)<sup>16</sup> has to say about our western relationship to the world and how they view a better life out of their interwoven perspective off all beings.

In the last part I point out how we can strengthen the two basic requirements to establish vibrating resonance wires, *intrinsic interests*, and *self-efficacy* and what else supports us to live a more re-sounding life. I answer the question how we can follow a compostists path of interbeing, to feel our tone again, fully live it and find the way back to sound in the symphony of healthy intact attuned relations with the world and live a good life.

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<sup>9</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble. Making Kin In The Chthulucene* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology Of Our Relationship To The World* (Cambridge and Medford: Polity Press, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2013); Yuval N. Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History Of Humankind* (London: Harvill Secker, 2014) and Lyons Oren, 'Listening To Natural Law', in *Spiritual Ecology, The Cry Of The Earth*, ed. by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Point Reyes, California: The Golden Sufi Center, 2016), pp. 13-17.

<sup>12</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>14</sup> Joanna Macy and Molly Brown, *Coming Back To Life: The Updated Guide To The Work That Reconnects* (Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Astrid H. Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge. Der Sympoietische Ansatz In Therapie, Beratung Und Pädagogik* (Heidelberg: Carl-Auer Verlag, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, pp. 97, 101, 145 – 150, 159 – 162.

## 1 Introduction

With his series of books *Acceleration*, *Resonance* and *The Uncontrollability of the World*, Hartmut Rosa gets on a classical scientific path to the bottom of the Western relation to the world in modernity. In great depth he explores “the basic categories of *resonance* and *alienation* as the two complementary fundamental forms of our relationship to the world”.<sup>17</sup> As I have investigated in previous work<sup>18</sup>, the crisis we face is a crisis of our relationship to life and death<sup>19</sup> – to the world<sup>20</sup>, a crisis of our values and the stories we base our society on<sup>21</sup> and a crisis of multispecies response-ability<sup>22</sup>.

The focus of this dissertation is on the question of a good life, and why we often fail to lead such a life today. Because our very existence is relational<sup>23</sup>, I examine the question how we can live another way of being-in-the-world, a resonant way which nourishes a better life for everyone. This is to say the good life is defined in this dissertation (compare 6.1) as a life in good relations with the world (including all beings).

The work includes the view of Hartmut Rosa and of multicoloured *voices of compostists* (a term beautifully coined by compostist Donna J. Haraway)<sup>24</sup>. I do not refer to the classical neuroscience or psychology of happiness or other directly to happiness related sciences.

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<sup>17</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology Of Our Relationship To The World* (Cambridge and Medford: Polity Press, 2019), p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> Tania Hoesli, *To What Extent Does The Solution To Our Ecological Crisis Require A Shift In Spiritual Attitudes?* (Unpublished Essay, Ecology and Spirituality, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble. Making Kin In The Chthulucene* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2013); Yuval N. Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History Of Humankind*. (London: Harvill Secker, 2014) and Lyons Oren, 'Listening To Natural Law', in *Spiritual Ecology, The Cry Of The Earth*, ed. by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Point Reyes, California: The Golden Sufi Center, 2016), pp. 13-17.

<sup>22</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 56.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*.

<sup>24</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, pp. 97; 101; 145 – 150; 159 – 162.

The world is silencing.<sup>25</sup> The Heart and the Mind are deadening.<sup>26</sup> The Earth dementia is spreading.<sup>27</sup> Based on the work of different authors this dissertation examines if and why this is the case. Further I research how we can feel and be our tone again to sound in and add our gift to the multi-species symphony of the world. Based on the examination of Rosa's resonance theory, his sociology of our relationship to the world, where resonance is defined as a strictly relational term to describe qualities of relationships, I assess how we, the late modern subjects, relate and resonate to the world. With the inspiration of various standard works of this time on our relationship to the world I investigate whether and how Rosa's hardcore theory can be transferred into a resonance practice. I answer the question how we can follow a compostists path of interbeing, to feel our tone again, fully live it and find the way back to sound in the symphony of healthy intact attuned relations with the world and live a good life.

### Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation starts off in Chapter 3 with a detailed description of Rosa's resonance theory, his diagnosis of modern time, his resonance theoretical view on nature and on a better life. In this presentation I focus on the relevant points of Rosa's work for my research question, and I investigate the effect of capitalism on the relationship to the world in places with financial prosperity. In the critique of Rosa's theory (at the end of chapter 3, in 3.5), I find that Rosa's social philosophic perspective, within *the common story of the world*, can only cover a part of my research question. Accordingly, I contrast his resonance theory with a deeply organic perspective (chapter 4). In this portrait of circular narratives, which I name *The View of compostists*, I refer in my analysis to authors such as David Abram, Gregory Cajete, Colin Campbell, Fritjof Capra, Charles Eisenstein, Donna J. Haraway, Graham Harvey, Astrid H. Kreszmeier, Joanna Macy and Robin Wall Kimmerer. These perspectives speak out of the new story of interbeing<sup>28</sup>, face the relationship with the world out of an indigenous (first peoples)

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<sup>25</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>26</sup> Joanna Macy and Molly Brown, *Coming Back To Life: The Updated Guide To The Work That Reconnects* (Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Astrid H. Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge. Der Sympoietische Ansatz In Therapie, Beratung Und Pädagogik* (Heidelberg: Carl-Auer Verlag, 2021).

<sup>28</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*.

understanding of reciprocity, response-ability (a term beautifully coined by Haraway<sup>29</sup>), gift, and gratitude.

In the synthesis I elaborate their findings and theories into a resonance practice (chapter 5) and into a practice to live a good life (chapter 6). I conclude the work in chapter 7 by weaving everything together.

In all the reflections in the following work, I focus on the "middle classes in the more prosperous regions of this world" who can afford "the 'luxury' of an orientation toward resonance".<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, pp. 2, 11, 12, 16, 22, 25, 28, 34-38, 56, 68, 71, 78, 89, 104 – 116 and more.

<sup>30</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 375.

## 2 Methodology

This dissertation is a literature based qualitative research paper. Both the author and the specialist literature follow a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject.<sup>31</sup> I share a critical attitude toward the classical western scientific stance of objectivity with Wall Kimmerer and other compostists: “We are all the product of our worldviews - even scientists who claim pure objectivity”<sup>32</sup>, or as Eisenstein puts it: “objective reality is just another myth”.

This work, this practice of science is based on a worldview of ecological compassion and response-ability.<sup>33</sup>

I aim in this dissertation to intertwine different modes of awareness, an analytic and an emotional intuitive one, a western scientific and a cultural animistic archaic one, to open and walk a path in reciprocity, gratitude, and love into the story of interbeing.

May this work bring people back into dialogue with the living vibrating world, the elements, the earth, and the universe – back into dialogue with all our relations. May this work support us to listen again to all the voices singing to us and to find our gifted tone to join the symphony of the world.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology Of Landscape: Places, Paths, And Monuments* (Oxford & Providence, USA: Berg Publishers, 1994), p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 163.

<sup>33</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, pp. 345, 346.

<sup>34</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

### 3 Bridging the Stories: Rosa's Resonance Theory: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World

Hartmut Rosa published in 2016 a new sociology of our relationship to the world where he examined the phenomenon of resonance in detail. Based on his theory of resonance (described in 3.1) chapter 3.2 gives a diagnosis of the actual condition of the world from a resonance theoretical perspective. This diagnosis will be further amplified for one of the two main spheres of resonance - nature (3.3). After the rather grim perspective on the modern relationship to the world and our capacity to define and live a good life, the chapter 3.4 explores ways to overcome the logic of escalation. To complete this spotlight onto Rosa's resonance theory the chapter 3.5 addresses critical perspectives onto Rosa's resonance theory.

#### 3.1 Rosa and his Resonance Theory

**Hartmut Rosa** (\*1965 Germany, lives and works in Germany) is one of Germany's leading sociologist, researcher, and political scientist of this time. He studied political science, German and philosophy. As a professor of general and theoretical sociology he teaches, researches, and writes at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. He is an author of numerous writings.

Rosa's work was largely inspired by Charles Taylor, a Canadian political scientist and philosopher who has written on contemporary life. Both are interested in starting from our everyday experiences, interpreting them, and researching how they relate to social structures and society. Through Charles Taylor, Rosa became acquainted with social philosophy, the study of contemporary life and the method of the phenomenological approach. With his series of books *Social Acceleration, A New Theory Of Modernity* (2013, first published in German 2005), *Resonance* (2019, first published in German 2016) and *the Uncontrollability of the World* (2020, first published in German 2018), Hartmut Rosa gets to the bottom of the Western world relationship of modernity. He explores in detail the sense of alienation and the silencing of the world. Starting from experience and its quality, the phenomenological

approach tries to objectify it, to take it away from one's own experience and generalise it.<sup>35</sup> This is often Rosa's working and researching method today. Rosa belongs to the theoretical school of critical theory, which combines philosophy, political science, economics, psychology, and sociology.<sup>36</sup>

Rosa's book *Social Acceleration, A New Theory Of Modernity*<sup>37</sup> arose from his different perceptions of the connection to the world in London and in the Black Forest. He researched the phenomenon and found that it must have to do with the patterns of time. The follow-up book *Resonance, A Sociology Of Our Relationship To The World*<sup>38</sup> also came about through a phenomenological approach. His basic question was: What are the moments when I experience life as successful and what are the moments when I feel bad?<sup>39</sup>

### 3.1.1 Resonance Theory, a Contribution to a Sociology of the Good Life

Rosa observed that he experiences the same environment at different times totally different. One day, he feels alive in a sense of connectedness to the world looking out of his window to the neighbours and the forest and one day he feels isolated and annoyed with the same view, the same neighbours, and the same forest.<sup>40</sup> Rosa observed that when he is well, there is a vibrating relationship with his environment, as if the forest would speak to him. When he is unwell, there is no dialogue, *the axes of resonance*, as he later named them, remain silent.<sup>41</sup> In extensive research Hartmut Rosa traced this phenomenon and developed the resonance theory (elaborated in his 800-page book *Resonance, A Sociology Of Our Relationship To The World*), which I examine in this chapter. He wrote this book as a contribution to a sociology of the good life.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Matze Hielscher. *Prof. Dr. Hartmut Rosa – Wie Führt Man Ein Gelungenes Leben?* [postcast], Hotel Matze #110, July 2020, <<https://open.spotify.com/episode/64vlfJKBAYNWuurnOHiBlI?si=ad06949d61b54e07>> [accessed 8 September 2021]; Tilley, *A phenomenology of landscape*, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Hielscher, Hotel Matze, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration, A New Theory Of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>39</sup> Hielscher, Hotel Matze, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Hielscher, Hotel Matze, 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World* (Cambridge & Medford: Polity Press, 2020); Rosa, *Resonance*; Hielscher, Hotel Matze, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 2.

So, the question arises *what is a good life?* The quality of a human life in modern times cannot simply be measured in terms of our equipment of resources, opportunities, financial wealth, or moments of happiness. According to Rosa life is good when we love it, when we celebrate an almost libidinal connection to everything we encounter and interact with. When we love the world and life, *vibrating wires* emerge between us and the world. If these wires can send and receive, we can speak about an intact connection to the world, an expression of stable relationships of resonance.<sup>43</sup> To answer what a good life is and how we can lead such a life we should, according to Rosa, direct our attention to the connection, our relationship to the world that which informs that life. In his book *Resonance*, Rosa examines therefore the difference between successful and unsuccessful relations to the world.<sup>44</sup> In the chapters 5 and 6 a larger examination of a *resonant* and a *good life* follows.

Rosa develops “from the physical phenomenon of resonance” a “social-scientific category”.<sup>45</sup> From this arises a “metaphor for describing the qualities of relationships” to analyse “how human beings relate to the world”.<sup>46</sup> Rosa's thesis: “Resonance is not an emotional state, but a mode of relation”<sup>47</sup>. Also, sadness or loneliness can enable a positive resonant experience. We therefore can love sad stories, because the mode of relation is neutral towards the emotional content (compare 3.1.4).<sup>48</sup> The categories of resonant relationships are well applicable to describe relationship qualities, be it between the physical body of a person and his or her psyche or between a person and her environment.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. pp. 8f.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. 165.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 164.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 174.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 167.

### 3.1.2 Rosa's Definition of Resonance

In the Latin etymology *re-sonare* is often translated as *resounding* and *echoing*.<sup>50</sup> According to Rosa, "resonance is produced only when the vibration of one body stimulates the other to produce *its own frequency*."<sup>51</sup> The two bodies of a resonance relationship must speak with their own voice.<sup>52</sup> Resonant relationships can be described as "a phenomenon of mutually *affecting and being affected*".<sup>53</sup> Rosa defines resonance in his theory of human relationships to the world as a strictly relational term, as a mode of being-in-the world. Resonance describes a specific way how a subject and the world relate with each other. It is a way where the two relating entities (in a resonant space) are "responding to each other" whereas each is "speaking with its own voice"<sup>54</sup>, which can be understood as re-sounding. Friedrich Cramer finds the beautiful term for re-sounding [*resonieren* in German] as «to respond by sounding-with».<sup>55</sup>

A constitutive feature of a resonance relationship is the conviction and the experience that our counterpart can speak with "his or her own voice". Both participants need therefore on one hand be sufficiently "closed" or self-consistent and on the other hand remaining receptive and open enough to be reached and affected by each other. Thereupon, Rosa resists to the second literal translation of echoing. For him the natural oscillation (or the self-oscillation) is missing there. Rosa does not see an own voice, a response in the echo.<sup>56</sup> In this dissertation I refer to Rosa's definition of resonance as a relational term.

Next to the responsive relationship through af←fect (to do *to*, allowing to be touched and moved) and e→motion (to move out *from*, outwardly pointed emotional movement), intrinsic interest (*libido*)<sup>57</sup>, and perceived self-efficacy are necessary for this form of world relationship to be formed. A moment of uncontrollability is elementary for resonance.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Glosbe, *Resonare In Englisch* <<https://glosbe.com/la/en/resonare>> [accessed 29 October 2021].

<sup>51</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 165.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 165.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 166.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 167.

<sup>55</sup> Friedrich Cramer, *Symphonie Des Lebendigen: Versuch Einer Allgemeinen Resonanztheorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1998), p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 167.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 163.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 174.

### 3.1.3 Other Notions of Resonance

I mentioned above that Rosa takes the concept of resonance as a physical phenomenon and redefines it in terms of the social sciences. To make this step more comprehensible and to avoid confusion, I would like to briefly highlight two fields, where resonance is understood and defined differently.

#### Resonance in Music

In music, resonance is understood as a stimulus to (the amplification of) vibration. A resonating body (or a volume of air) vibrates and transmits the frequency amplified to the air.<sup>59</sup>

During the musical act, a musician is always in a threefold connection to resonance: to herself / himself as a resonance body (singer) or the instrument, the space as a further resonance carrier and the listener (audience). Body, space, and listener (audience) merge in the music, become a vibrating unity. The mystery and the power of the interaction of the law of resonance is therefore not only dependent on the openness of the sender (musician) and the receiver (audience), but also on the space, which in its specific character can increase or decrease the resonance capacity. A musician consequently, not only plays and resonates with the listeners; he/she also connects with the space, its essence, and its character, to achieve the highest possible transmittable vibration intensity. In this respect, the mystery of space is a living elemental prerequisite for a musician and an equally important component for the unfolding of resonance. Sound is vibration, creates resonance and thus relationship!<sup>60</sup>

#### The Law of Resonance: Resonance and Manifestation

The law of resonance (also called the law of the universe, the law of attraction or the law of manifestation/creation or other) states that the same attracts the same, and similar resonates with similar. In the understanding of this law, energy follows attention. Further, there is a quantum field, which is an energetic field of infinite possibilities. The theory says that through what we pay attention to, and hence gift energy (among other things through

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<sup>59</sup> Musiklexikon, Resonanz <<http://www.musiklexikon.info/musiklexikon/resonanz>> [accessed 29 December 2021]

<sup>60</sup> Christian Zehnder, *Von Schwingung, Klang und Resonanz* [public seminar] (Klangwelt Toggenburg Switzerland, 6th November 2021).

our thinking and feeling), we attract the corresponding possibilities from this field magnetically into our world of experience. We determine the reality we experience through our attention. This applies to both positive and negative things. Everything we deal with intensively in our consciousness grows and is manifested as experience in our life at some point. This can be used to manifest consciously.<sup>61</sup>

The law of resonance is discussed very controversially. It is labelled as new-age hype or argued with the latest research in quantum physics and neuroscience. However, I am aware that the law of resonance could have a relevant influence on the good life. To investigate whether and how exactly the law of resonance applies, and we can manifest with our thoughts and feelings is neither in the intention nor in the possibility of this work.

#### 3.1.4 Resonance and Alienation as Basic Categories of our Relationship to the World

Rosa sees moments of resonance, with their antithesis of experiences of alienation, as the two poles of tension and as our everyday driving sources of "being-in-the-world". When we are in an experience of alienation our axes of resonance remain mute and rigid (like in a state of depression and burnout), the world appears as cold and non-responsive, and our life as an accumulation of capricious dangers and annoying disturbances.<sup>62</sup> Alienation can be defined as a relation of relationlessness.<sup>63</sup> It is a form of relationship to the world where indifference, hostility and repulsion prevail. You may have a good job, an intact family, a social network etc., but these no longer "speak" to you. In a state of alienation, the subject is not capable of being touched, or affected, there is no felt self-efficacy any longer. Everything appears lifeless, empty, and dead.<sup>64</sup>

Alienation and resonance go hand in hand, they generate and mutually reinforce each other. The more our sensitivity to alienation is formed, the deeper resonant relationships we can experience. Alienation must first become perceptible before we can enter resonant world relations.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Joe Dispenza, *Breaking The Habit Of Being Yourself. How To Lose Your Mind And Create A New One* (New York City: Hay House, 2012).

<sup>62</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, pp. 9, 174 – 191.

<sup>63</sup> Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), pp. 1 - 42.

<sup>64</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, pp. 174 – 191.

<sup>65</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

As I described in 3.1.1, also sadness or loneliness can enable a positive resonant experience. It is possible to experience “two modes of relating to the world at once”. We can be touched and moved – feeling resonance – by an aesthetic expression of existential alienation. So, we might experience resonance and alienation, “in a relation of mutual escalation”.<sup>66</sup>

The “resonance of alienation” makes us experience an “emotional double structure of pleasurable pain or painful pleasure, often resulting in tears” and only tangible in an “aesthetic relationship to the world”.<sup>67</sup> As long as we can still let ourselves be touched by art or aesthetic experiences (even though it might be through an expression of alienation), we know that our relationship to the world can still be modified, changed or transformed.<sup>68</sup> If this is not the case, we might be deep within a depression and therefore totally ossified and hardened relationship to the world, gridlocked in a state of alienation.

### 3.1.5 What causes the vibrating Connectedness of Being in the World?

Rosa analyses the vibrating connectedness of a human being with the world, revealing four elements:

1. **Openness:** You must let yourself be touched (Latour: I have to let myself be called). This is not something you can buy, nor plan, nor create.
2. **Self-efficacy:** My ability to respond, I must be able to do something with the thing that calls me. I have to want to respond to it (dance, sing along, let myself be touched). We experience ourselves as alive and self-efficacious when we enter a dialogue.
3. **Transformation and metamorphosis.** To be touched and transformed is the core longing of human life. This always happens when we engage as a WHOLE.
4. **Unavailability.** Neither can I predict when and where I will be touched, and the outcome is open.<sup>69</sup>

Rosa’s sociology of our relationship to the world and his theory of resonance has an immense dimension and covers all our areas of modern life. To examine the question of a good life we

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<sup>66</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 287.

<sup>67</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 288.

<sup>68</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 290.

<sup>69</sup> Hielscher, *Hotel Matze*, 2020.

first have a look at the relation of modern subjects to the world. To do so, I define modernity in the next chapter in its core, examine the kinetic energy of modern society and observe how the notion of time influences our way of relating to the world.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.2 Diagnosis of Modern Times: The Silencing of the World

The unifying tendency of modernity, or “modernities”, is the systematic change of time structures.<sup>71</sup> A modern society, as Rosa defines it, “*is one that can stabilize itself only dynamically, in other words one that requires constant economic growth, technological acceleration, and cultural innovation in order to maintain its institutional status quo*”<sup>72</sup>.

According to Rosa, it is not the insatiableness or the greed for more that is pushing us, but the fear of less. We are always and everywhere on an escalator which is moving down. To stop and to take a break, means we are losing ground “against a highly dynamic environment”. We are always in competition, without the possibility to step out of this game, let alone say loud and clearly *stop!*<sup>73</sup> Without the constant competitive environment, the critical energy “to fulfil dynamic stabilization’s imperatives of growth” would not be provided.<sup>74</sup> It is no longer the hope in the parents that the children will one day be better off, but only the fear that they will not be worse. That was not always the case. This basic institutional structure, which is dependent on constant escalation, has been the result of a structural change since the 18th century. A structural change which has taken place at all levels of institutional life in the western modern world.<sup>75</sup>

Besides the two already mentioned structural elements of modernity (*mode of dynamic stabilization* and *competition*) Rosa describes two others: 1. “the cultural fact of modernity as an age of open ethical horizons” and 2. “the fact of ethical privatization, which has made the task of determining one’s purpose in life into a nearly insoluble problem”.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>71</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Beschleunigung. Die Veränderung Der Zeitstrukturen In Der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005).

<sup>72</sup> Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World*, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 9f.

<sup>74</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 21.

<sup>75</sup> Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World*, pp. 9f.

<sup>76</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 22.

Fear (of falling behind) alone is not enough to maintain a social formation for a long time. There needs to be a positive, attractive force that promises a good life, a better life. And this force Rosa identified as “*the promise of expanding our share of the world*”.<sup>77</sup> The logic of escalation improves indeed the individual and collective equipment of resources, but Rosa identified that living well does not depend on the resource situation. On the contrary, the logic of escalation structurally undermines the conditions for the realization of a good life!<sup>78</sup> A growth society based on escalation, which can only stabilise itself dynamically, is therefore increasingly at odds with the resonance demand and promise of modernity.<sup>79</sup> This leads to the disenchanting, mute world relations of the modern present in western, affluent strata of the population. “The world literally stops singing”<sup>80</sup>. The world is disenchanting in similar degrees as the subjects increase their world range. Self-efficacy is in this process not experienced in a resonance-sensitive sense, but in reifying control. Rosa describes modernity’s logic of escalation as both cause and consequence of the disturbed relation to the world.<sup>81</sup>

### Acceleration and Time

In his book *Social Acceleration, A New Theory Of Modernity*<sup>82</sup> Rosa examines the phenomenology of social acceleration (“growth in quantity per unit of time”<sup>83</sup>) in great detail. In our everyday life in modern societies, time often appears as deeply paradoxical. We save it in ever larger quantities, in almost everything we do, but time never loses its scarce character at all. The well-known piece of folk wisdom which Michael Ende illustrated impressively in the book *Momo*, seems to be so true: “*the more time we save, the less we have*”.<sup>84</sup> Late modern subjects often feel that they never get around to what is important to them.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World*, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. pp. 434 – 443.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 326.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Hartmut, *Social Acceleration*.

<sup>83</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Hartmut, *Social Acceleration*, p. 16.

<sup>85</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 433.

But on late modern days, we do not only have less time, Rosa describes that acceleration fundamentally changes the way we relate to everything, to space and time, to other humans and to objects, and eventually to ourselves, our bodies and our psyche.<sup>86</sup>

### 3.3 Rosa's Resonance Theory & Nature

In the following I will examine *the sphere of resonance of nature* in more detail. Along with music, nature is the most important sphere of resonance for a late modern subject. Nature could only become a sphere of resonance and thus have its own voice (*the voice of nature*) through the emancipation of the modern culture of the requirements of nature. Because we can turn night into daytime, decide about the temperature in our room and about what we eat independent of the season around us, we can perceive "nature as a resonant counterpart to which we ought to listen." With this cultural achievement we invented the voice of nature.<sup>87</sup>

This *voice of nature* received practical relevance in our everyday life. Often, we give each other the advice *to listen to nature*. This imperative place the outer and inner worlds in a resonant relationship and hence connect them. To listen to the *voice of nature* and to listen to oneself, to our inner nature can therefore merge in their action and inner attitude. Often it even appears as a prerequisite for a successful life that we can comprehend our inner nature through listening to the outer nature. As with prayer, the direction of the movement can no longer be clearly defined.<sup>88</sup>

Through the construction of this closed entity, mankind can enter a relationship of resonance or alienation with nature. In a mute, reifying relation humankind is processing, treating, and exploiting nature in a very aggressive and deaf attitude.<sup>89</sup>

The concept of a significant *voice of nature* is from the standpoint of natural sciences simply illogical. Compared to other cultures, modernity makes (through science) a strict distinction between an animate resonant culture and a mute nature. All non-human entities are therefore not capable of resonance.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. pp. 268 – 280.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. pp. 268 – 280.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. pp. 268 – 280.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. pp. 268 – 280.

From the perspective of resonance theory, the root of modernity's basic anxiety related to ecology is the concern that we might lose nature as a *sphere of resonance*. It is not the fear that we might lose nature as a *resource*, but that we lose an independent vis-à-vis with response-ability (as Haraway would say<sup>91</sup>), and hence able to offer us orientation.<sup>92</sup> As modern human beings we are depending on resonant counterparts to determine ourselves and develop our own identity.<sup>93</sup>

Rosa claims that the current cultural environmental problem is the *silencing of nature* (in and outside us) and its reduction to what is available and what is still to be made available. He describes that one big lack of the environmental scene (politics, sociology, natural sciences, ...) is the missing conceptual means to grasp and articulate the emerging resonance catastrophe.<sup>94</sup> They still name and interpret the ecological crisis in the words of "dwindling resources" and "disastrous chains of cause and effect".<sup>95</sup> The relational and narrative origin of the ecological crisis is not recognized.

The space around us – and therefore also an ecosystem acts on our "psychophysical relationship to the world".<sup>96</sup> We perceive ourselves different whether we stand on a mountain, by the sea or in a big city.<sup>97</sup> There are "objectifiable interactions" between us and the landscape.<sup>98</sup> A "non-instrumental, non-manipulative relationship of correspondence" between "natural objects or spaces" and late modern subjects are possible.<sup>99</sup> It is well documented, that the experience of "sensual/practical resonant relationships" with extensive natural spaces or animals are of high therapeutic value.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

<sup>92</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 274.

<sup>93</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Individuelle Identität Und Kulturelle Praxis. Politische Philosophie Nach Charles Taylor* (Frankfurt am Main & New York: Campus Verlag, 1998), pp. 57-239; Charles Taylor, *Sources Of The Self. The Making Of The Modern Identity* (Cambridge & Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>94</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 274.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 274.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p. 271.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p. 271.

<sup>98</sup> Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics Of Atmospheres*, edited by Jean-Paul Thibaud (London & New York: Routledge, 2017); Ulrich Gebhard, *Kind Und Natur: Die Bedeutung Der Natur Für Die Psychische Entwicklung*, 5 edn. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2020).

<sup>99</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 271.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 272; Gebhard, *Kind Und Natur*, pp. 76-87, 108 – 114.

Alienation is evident in our constitutive inability to live sustainably not only regarding nature, but also with respect to the resonant sphere of history. *Generational justice* is often no more than an ignored, abstract, and moral demand. That we could hardly be further from its lived implementation is little surprising when we perceive ourselves as subjects disconnected and cut off in our existence and unrelated to our ancestors and descendants. However, if we feel responsively connected to all life in all times, in Haraway's words: live response-ability, as it is completely natural for many indigenous traditions<sup>101</sup>, if we feel that this aliveness and current of history concerns us (strong valuation), then we do not need such principles to justify our sustainable life. In this case, lived sufficiency and material restrictions are not perceived as a restriction at all, nor, as Kreszmeier believes, out of a sense of indebtedness<sup>102</sup>, but as a moment of resonance and thus, as an element of a successful live.<sup>103</sup>

To summarise this part, according to Rosa there is the voice of nature, whose silencing puts us into a rigidity of fear because we are depending on her to distinguish our own identity, although this voice is not recognised by western science. And there is the self-service shop nature in which we freely enrich ourselves in a relation of relationlessness.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

<sup>102</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 59.

<sup>103</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 428.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 268 – 280.

### 3.4 A Better World is Possible

Rosa advocates the attitude that a better world is possible, and that it may be identified by its core criterion, which is to listen and to respond rather than dominance and control. For him the overcoming of the logic of escalation and the change of the world relationship are the central challenges of our time. It is not alone within our power to make the world speak or sing again, but it is also not completely out of our control. We can start working on improving the quality of our interaction and relation with the world right now: individually as well as collectively.<sup>105</sup>

According to Rosa a change in awareness alone is not enough, a paradigm shift from the mode of dynamic stabilization (and therefore a reorientation of all the systems based on it, like politics and lifeworld) to a sensitivity to resonance is needed.<sup>106</sup> Fundamental institutional reforms are the prerequisite for overcoming the logic of escalation. Not the range of influence should dominate our lives, but the quality of our relation to the world.<sup>107</sup> The reduction of a competition-based orientation and the implementation of a universal basic income (financed by an inheritance tax) could lay an essential foundation stone in this respect.<sup>108</sup> As scale for quality can and should serve the ability and possibility to establish and maintain axes of resonance and not the quantitative escalation. Even if Rosa believes that there is basically no answer to the question of how the transition to a post-growth society and to a different form of world relationship can be achieved, he tries to contribute his part with his work resonance by at least allowing one to sense another kind of being, a new way of being in relation to life and to the world.<sup>109</sup>

As shown in the previous chapters, Rosa describes in detail how our modern society is gearing itself towards alienation and the allowance of the capacity for resonance to dwindle. At the same time, he shows that a better world would be possible and what it would take, such as the conceptual means, to grasp, articulate and then avert the looming resonance catastrophe. From my perspective, he not only justifiably defends himself against the

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<sup>105</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, pp. 434 – 459.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 436, 458 f.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* p. 436.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 458 f.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 434 – 459.

accusation that his theory is an abstract, theoretical, inapplicable concept. That the relational quality of our relationship to the world has a decisive influence on our lives and that we should listen and respond more, is nothing new. How exactly can we do so, and can we train our ability for resonance? Even though there is on a concrete level not that much more he added, his theory attaches great importance to this knowledge and opens the doors into acknowledged Western science. To get closer to the answers to my question about a good life, I will continue in the following chapter 3.5, to examine some for my question relevant arguments in greater depth and in a critical perspective. In chapter 4 I contrast Rosa's resonance theory with more radical, practical and direct relational theories, which are then both analysed in the Synthesis (5 and 6).

### 3.5 A critical Perspective onto Rosa's Theory

Just as Rosa accuses the environmental scene of not having appropriate conceptual means to comprehend the emerging resonance catastrophe for what it is, and for not recognizing the origin of the ecological crisis in our narratives and our way of relating, I accuse Rosa for not examining the narratives who lie beyond the modern logic of escalation and beyond the promise of expanding our share of the world either. Rosa states that problematical relationships to the world not only the consequence of acceleration but also the cause. But where does the urge of acceleration or the dysfunctional relationship come from? What are we running away from? What are we afraid of? What do we need to change? (4.1, 4.3, 5.3 and 6).

Rosa writes, "what late modernity lacks is ... a perceptible, palpable vision of a different kind of relationship to the world, a concept for its now nameless longing".<sup>110</sup> I doubt that the term and the vision of resonance will ever achieve the same charisma as love or peace has. To sum up Abram, Cajete, Campbell, Eisenstein, Haraway, Kreszmeier, Macy, Wall Kimmerer and many others (compare chapter 4), we could say, what late modernity lacks is a different narrative of time, a vision of love, of re-connection, and aliveness. The longing is to live a

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<sup>110</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 443.

sensing life in reciprocity, in response-ability and in remembering of who we are, who we want to become, where we came from and where we are going to.

In my perspective Rosa's critique there is right and wrong at the same time. I agree with Rosa that the environmental crisis has more to do with alienation than with "dwindling resources", that this is not recognised in some environmental science and policy circles of modernity, and that the dimensions of relationships need to be looked at. I agree further that the classic modern natural sciences lack the language and the conceptual means to develop helpful solutions.

Trained in environmental engineering and environmental education and after these studies, I can say, that there is no such thing as "the natural sciences". As with everywhere – it is about the plurals. Rosa's reducing distinction between the natural sciences and "potentially esoteric interpretive approaches" claims that the natural sciences speak in one voice. He thus devalues any science that has a different basic understanding of relationship and a good life than the modern one. I am outraged that no mention is made of the fact that other natural sciences - such as many indigenous voices - have been saying for centuries that it is all about the way we relate to the world.<sup>111</sup> Further Rosa ignores and devalues with his modern scientific spirit THE professionals when it comes to a sociology of the relationship *with* the world: the more-than-human world.

From the opposite perspective we could also thank Rosa to put indigenous knowledge (*it is all about the way we relate*) into modern sciences, within a frame of modern understanding of 'the dead more-than-human world', even if a very shallow aftertaste remains. For me, it is incomprehensible how such a thick book on the sociology of our relationship to the world can be written, with a chapter *The Voice of Nature*, without a clear, critical discussion about the denial of western sciences for the ability to resonate to all non-human entities. I also miss an examination of the resulting effect on our relationship to the world of this worldview. An analysis of the influence of our narratives on our relationships would have been of great interest for me.

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<sup>111</sup> Abram, Cajete, Campbell, Eisenstein, Haraway, Kreszmeier, Macy, Wall-Kimmerer, just to mention a few.

Examinations show, that our resonant relationship with nature the product is of engaged, concrete and emotionally relevant interactions, not of mental learning processes or intellectual conclusions.<sup>112</sup> Rosa argues, that the problem is that this lived experience cannot be rationalized cognitively, and that this active way of relating to nature cannot be found in the two most common modern ways of handling nature – “the scientific study of nature and especially the technological or productivist appropriation of nature”. Both consider nature only through the perspective what humankind can take, shape and win.<sup>113</sup>

In other words, to encourage resonant relationships with nature we need to value and promote practical, emotional interactions – not only on the farm with children, but also in acknowledged academia. My criticism at this point is that Rosa repeatedly describes the currently predominant world relationship to nature but does not give any space to alternative - and lived - world relationships. On the contrary. Statements like "cannot be justified cognitively"<sup>114</sup> from the mouth of an influential author and thinker of our time, precisely triggers that this limited mind (4.1) scientific attitude and minimisation of practical and emotionally significant experiences lead to the fact that our prevailing science and thus opinion formation, remains narrow and incapable of developing real solutions.

In my whole examination of the modern time, a western tendency to separate, isolate, pigeonhole and generalise shows up. According to Kaufmann, this way of analysis is dead. He is committed to a “qualitative inquiry beyond Western theory”. He proposes that indigenous and quantum thought alter the narrative design of conventional Western theory, taking into consideration subjective exploration in/through being.<sup>115</sup> This would of course also include the notion of time. In the following chapter 4, I am going to introduce you to other perspectives, views of compostists.

The last topic getting a raw deal in these 500 pages about resonance, is our approach to death and the interplay between our finite body and resonance. I discuss this subject in chapter 6.5.

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<sup>112</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 273; Gebhard, *Kind und Natur*, pp.12, 51-77; Böhme, *The Aesthetics Of Atmospheres*.

<sup>113</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 273.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p. 273.

<sup>115</sup> Kaufmann, Jodi, 'Theory Is Dead', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23.6 (2017), 423–426 <DOI: 10.1177/1077800416672699>, p. 423.

## 4 The View of Compostists

**Donna Jeanne Haraway** (\*1944 in the United States) defines with her term compostist an understanding of life and death that seems very appropriate to me for this work and as the de- and superscription of various voices in this chapter. It can be an organic view, an animistic view, an indigenous view, a view of earthworms, earthlings and all the humusities (not (only) the humanities<sup>116</sup>) inhabiting critters. Haraway describes the compostists clearly as the “Critters—human and not—become-with each other, compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time and stuff in sympoietic tangling, in ecological evolutionary developmental earthly worlding and unworlding.”<sup>117</sup> *Sympoiesis, sympoietic, or sym peoples* are also terms coined by Haraway, they stand for *making with*.<sup>118</sup>

In her book *Staying with the Trouble* Haraway includes death impressively in the big picture by generally writing about “living and dying” and not just about living in earth.<sup>119</sup> **David Abram** (\*1957 in the United States)<sup>120</sup> philosopher, cultural ecologist and author, describes his notion as a perception of anima, a perception of the other as at least potentially alive.<sup>121</sup>

The compostists perceive, think, and act within relational understandings of the world<sup>122</sup>, where the ecological well-being, the ecological stewardship or the ecological society is put in the first place<sup>123</sup>, where also a river or a species is perceived, named and recognized as a person<sup>124</sup>, and where all beings are actively and voluntary in charge of relationships of well-being between all species<sup>125</sup>. Humans are more likely seen as younger siblings of evolution, of

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<sup>116</sup> Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 97.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p. 97.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. pp. 5, 33.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. pp. 2, 8, 10, 15, 16, 25, 28, 29 and many more.

<sup>120</sup> Wikipedia, *David Abram* (2020) <[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Abram](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Abram)> [accessed 3 December 2021].

<sup>121</sup> David Abram, *Earth Talk: A Few Qualities Common to Traditionally Oral, Indigenous Cultures* [video]. 2014 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLtQWPT9tb4>> [accessed 10 December 2021].

<sup>122</sup> Miguel Astor-Aguilera and Graham Harvey (ed.). *Rethinking Relations And Animism, Personhood And Materiality* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 47.

<sup>123</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, pp. 152, 153; Colin Campbell, *Earth Talk at the Schumacher College: Ritual, Omens, and Divination* [video]. 2014 <<https://andrew-colin-johncampbell.simplesites.net/teacher>> [accessed 6 December 2021].

<sup>124</sup> Astor-Aguilera and Harvey, *Rethinking Relations And Animism*; Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

<sup>125</sup> Deborah Bird Rose, ‘Totemism, Regions, and Co-Management in Aboriginal Australia’. *Paper presented at Crossing Boundaries, International Association for the Study of Common Property 7th Annual Conference* (Vancouver, 1998), p. 7

animals and plants and not as the only souled supreme beings on a dead planet. The western world and the compostists contradict each other in the most basic laws and understandings of how nature and the world work.<sup>126</sup> A good example of this is the notion of time, as it has a major influence on the way we relate (compare the section about generational justice in 3.3).

### The Notion of Time & Interconnectedness

Indigenous (First peoples) thought does not perceive time as something linear and exclusive. In the concept of interconnectedness exists no division between the living and the non-living.<sup>127</sup> Abram's description of time, death and body describes the humusities view of interconnectedness beautifully: "... the enveloping and sensuous earth remains the dwelling place of both the living and the dead. The "body"—whether human or otherwise—is not yet a mechanical object in such cultures, but is a magical entity, the mind's own sensuous aspect, and at death the body's decomposition into soil, worms, and dust can only signify the gradual reintegration of one's ancestors and elders into the living landscape, from which all, too, are born."<sup>128</sup> For Gregory Cajete the split between living and non-living (also in the dimension of time) is one of the main big problems of the west.<sup>129</sup>

#### 4.1 Diagnosis of Modern Times in Compostists Words: Validation through Production

As for Rosa, the focus of attention for the compostists is on relationships. Wall-Kimmerer sums up this chapter very clear in one sentence: "It's not just land that is broken, but more importantly, our relationship to land."<sup>130</sup>

**Colin Campbell** (\*1963 in Zimbabwe) a teacher, diviner and artist, a living bridge "between rare pre-industrial African culture and contemporary Western culture"<sup>131</sup>, describes in his earth talk similar difficulties we face presently as Rosa mentioned in different words. He

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<<http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/1187/rose.pdf>> [accessed 18 December 2021].

<sup>126</sup> Wall-Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

<sup>127</sup> Kaufmann, 'Theory Is Dead'.

<sup>128</sup> David, Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous. Perception And Language In A More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 19.

<sup>129</sup> Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws Of Interdependence* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Books, 2000).

<sup>130</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 9.

<sup>131</sup> Colin Campbell, *Colin Campbell* <<https://andrew-colin-johncampbell.simplesites.net>> [accessed 6 December 2021].

described that the industrial way of living has reduced our sense of who we are and how we relate. The deep answers to the central questions of our existence, the underlying purpose in our lives got, according to Campbell, abandoned about 400 years ago. This leaves us back in a state of “starvation of the soul”. As a result, individuals experience an internal retraction, we isolate ourselves more and more, we become mute and deaf for the real world around us and shift our lives into virtual realities.<sup>132</sup> Kreszmeier describes this tight isolation also as a deep insecurity around the question of belonging.<sup>133</sup> Traditional elders in southern Africa see the cause of this in the god we worship. The god we worship in the west is a machine. Our entire way of life, all we do and all we are is machine-like. Any god makes things in his or her own image, therefore a machine god makes machines. At the end of a day, we evaluate ourselves in the scale of productiveness. We long for validation within our hearts and it seems it can only be found if we are productive. Better, faster, cleverer, more beautiful, we always optimise ourselves, so that the next day is going to be more productive. To be ill, old, or slow is a direct threat of my validation in life, of my entire meaning and my place as a person in this world.<sup>134</sup>

Abram describes that “it is a precarious situation, given our age-old reciprocity with the many-voiced landscape”, that we participate today just only “with other humans” and our own man-made devices. He sees the risk that without a fundamental renewal of “our acquaintance with the sensuous world”, and without the knowledge of “the textures, the rhythms and tastes of the bodily world” we can no longer distinguish, and we might become our technologies, our machines ourselves.<sup>135</sup> The two ways of Campbell and Abram to describe the modern times are closely related. They both see the cause of our modern disasters of living systems in our machine-like way of life and relationship to the world. There to lead the stories we live after, the notions who lie beyond our existence and define our way of relating (compare 6.7 and 6.8).<sup>136</sup>

Abram describes all these notions combined with their cause in a very plausible way:

...For it is likely that the ‘inner world’ of our Western psychological experience, like the supernatural heaven of Christian belief, originates in the loss of our ancestral reciprocity with the animate earth. When the animate powers that

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<sup>132</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>133</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, pp. 50 – 55.

<sup>134</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>135</sup> Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous*, p. 9.

<sup>136</sup> Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous*; Campbell, 2014.

surround us are suddenly construed as having less significance than ourselves [as described by Rosa as distinctive feature of western modernity<sup>137</sup>], when the generative earth is abruptly defined as a determinate object devoid of its own sensations and feelings, then the sense of a wild and multiplicitous otherness (in relation to which human existence has always oriented itself) must migrate, either into a supersensory heaven beyond the natural world, or else into the human skull itself—the only allowable refuge, in this world, for what is ineffable and unfathomable.<sup>138</sup>

For **Joanna Macy** (\*1929 in the United States) an environmental activist specialised in general systems theory, and deep ecology, one of the characteristic features of modernity is to be witnesses to the annihilation of life, caused by the Industrial Growth Society, on a scale that no preceding generation has ever experienced. For Macy the greatest danger of following the old paradigm of the western modern world, “is the deadening of our response”<sup>139</sup>, the deadening process of our hearts and mind. In her book *Coming Back To Life*<sup>140</sup>, she carefully analyses the fears laying behind this blunting process and the caused impediment. In her book she also presents a comprehensive method for the urgently needed re-connection: the *Work That Reconnects*.<sup>141</sup> A method applied in groups, facilitating the solidary and brave action for the good of a world worth living in.

**Astrid Habiba Kreszmeier** (\*1964 in Austria, lives and works in Switzerland) a psychotherapist and founder of the systemic nature therapy describes the current state as an earth dementia that began several millennia ago and has progressed exponentially over the last 200 years.<sup>142</sup> The circular way of thinking, which shaped our perception for centuries, was through violent pragmatism successively replaced by linear thinking.<sup>143</sup>

To better understand what is going on in our western world and to become able to live a good life and engage for peace, ecology, and justice, Macy divides the present into three

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<sup>137</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, pp. 226 – 233.

<sup>138</sup> Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous*, p. 16.

<sup>139</sup> Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope, How To Face The Mess We're In Without Going Crazy* (Novato, California: New World Library, 2012) Introduction.

<sup>140</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*, pp. 1 – 35.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 15.

<sup>143</sup> Terra Sagrada, *Orixá-Dialoge - ein Gespräch mit Iyalorixá Habiba Kreszmeier* (2021) <<https://terrasagrada.info/blog/natur-dialoge>> [accessed 20 December 2021].

simultaneous stories. The story of industrial growth society she names “Business As Usual”, the story of the activists trying to bring societies’ awareness on to the system collapses and damages caused through the first story is named “the Great Unravelling” and the third story, a creative and new response of humanity enabling the transition to a “Life-Sustaining Society” is called “The Great Turning”. In the perspective of Macy<sup>144</sup> and Eisenstein<sup>145</sup> we can choose which reality is ours.

Capra confirms the compostists diagnosis of modern time, he describes the paradigm of the modern Western society like Campbell and others:

This paradigm consists of a number of entrenched ideas and values, among them the view of the universe as a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks, the view of the human body as a machine, the view of life in society as a competitive struggle for existence, the belief in unlimited material progress to be achieved through economic and technological growth, and-last, but not least-the belief that a society in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male is one that follows a basic law of nature. All these assumptions have been fatefully challenged by recent events. And, indeed, a radical revision of them is now occurring.<sup>146</sup>

## 4.2 The Compostists & Nature

What is the term *nature* about? It is important to be aware, that the *concept of nature* and the recapitulation of a many-sidedness into a collective singular noun<sup>147</sup>, is nowadays used in many cultures, but not in all. There are people whose language does not know this concept. They know trees, mountains, rivers, and plants per name, they know a lot about them, so also how to live and cooperate with them, but they do not know and do not use the generalising *concept of nature*. Kreszmeier articulates that the creation and use of such umbrella terms often has the effect that plural diversity is forgotten and lost in a mishmash of the uniformity of one single term.<sup>148</sup> For **Graham Harvey** (\*1959), an English professor and author specialised in the field of indigenous religions and animism<sup>149</sup>, there is not such a place as nature, there is

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<sup>144</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*, pp. 1 – 35.

<sup>145</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*.

<sup>146</sup> Fritjof Capra, *The Web Of Life: A New Scientific Understanding Of Living Systems* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), p. 6.

<sup>147</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>148</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 10.

<sup>149</sup> Wikipedia, *Graham Harvey (religious studies scholar)* (2021)

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham\\_Harvey\\_\(religious\\_studies\\_scholar\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_Harvey_(religious_studies_scholar))> [accessed 10 December 2021].

not one nature, there are natures, places, ecosystems, and especially closer and further relationships.<sup>150</sup>

Further it is important to be aware that our language and the terms and words we use make a significant impact on the way we relate (compare 6.7). The way to “chart relationships in language” is called grammar.<sup>151</sup>

Compostists have a humus, multi-species, sympoietic, *tentacular thinking* (a term coined by Haraway<sup>152</sup>, standing for *thinking with*), co-creating, multi-dimensional, holistic, pluralistic view of interbeing onto the web of life. They do write about their concerns about the irreversible damage to the around 11 billion humans who will be *in* the earth (as Abram says<sup>153</sup>, 6.7) at the end of the twenty-first century, but also, equivalent they deal with the consequences for zillions of other critters.<sup>154</sup>

#### 4.3 A Better World is possible - Spaces of Remembrance

Like Rosa, the compostists also think that a better world is possible.<sup>155</sup> The proposed paths are different but overlap in places. Haraway sees her concept of *staying with the trouble* as incompatible with frequent responses to the horrors of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene: the first is the ridiculous faith technofixes and the second response is the position that nothing can make a difference because it is too late anyway. In the second response the motivation to actively trust each other for collaborating for a resurgent world faded away. For Haraway an essential question is how we can address the explosiveness and urgency of the incredible population growth since 1950. We need to think together and in new ways, now. It is impossible for her that this can only be a humanist affair.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Graham Harvey, *An Introduction To Animism And Indigenous Religion* [seminar to MA Ecology and Spirituality Year 1] CSPH7069: *Ecology and Spirituality* (Schumacher College, Devon & UWTSO Lampeter, 26 January 2017).

<sup>151</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 57.

<sup>152</sup> Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, pp. 5, 30 – 57.

<sup>153</sup> David Abram, *Language And The Perception Of Nature* [video]. 2018  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npQ18V1BDik>> [accessed 8 December 2021]

<sup>154</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 102.

<sup>155</sup> Abram, Campbell, Macy and Wall Kimmerer.

<sup>156</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, pp. 1-8.

Macy calls the better world a life-sustaining society within the planetary boundaries<sup>157</sup> and Eisenstein the new story of interbeing<sup>158</sup>. ‘The work that reconnects’ (compare below) is Macy’s answer to the analysis of modern times.<sup>159</sup> Kreszmeier proposes to enact human affairs systemically and, above all, to think and feel as fellow earth-dwellers and to let this perception flow into our communication.<sup>160</sup> Abram writes, that because of the fast decay of wild nature and the steady extinction of other species our human relationships are flattening. Therefore, we need to understand what is going on and to alleviate the current alienation from the animate earth.<sup>161</sup> He proposes: “only in regular contact with the tangible ground and sky can we learn how to orient and to navigate in the multiple dimensions that now claim us.”<sup>162</sup> For Abram it is all about remembering our ancestral reciprocity with the animate earth.<sup>163</sup> He thinks through changing the ways we speak (compare 6.7), we can “begin to feel the world, to feel the earth around us again.”<sup>164</sup> Campbell emphasises, that no matter how much machine-like we are, we still go “through the process of what being human means” and therefore one of the most important questions is how we relate to the passages we go through from birth to death.<sup>165</sup>

### Joanna Macy and the Work That Reconnects

On the research journey through life towards the creation of a life-sustaining human culture, Macy’s work got shaped through her devotion to Buddhism. The work that reconnects combines insights of postmodern science and indigenous knowledge. It is about finding into a new relationship with the world, becoming empowered to participate in the Great Turning (4.1) and to take your life into your own hands again. What started off as Despair and Empowerment work, found different influences on the way, also through the work of Arne Næss (a Norwegian philosopher and eco-activist), and got famous and implemented on the whole planet with the title the work that reconnects. Located in the field of deep ecology the

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<sup>157</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*.

<sup>158</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*.

<sup>159</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*.

<sup>160</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 15.

<sup>161</sup> Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous*.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> David Abram, *Wild Insights - The Heartbeat Is Wild By Dr David Abram* [video]. 2010 <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HRR4Mee8Ec](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HRR4Mee8Ec)> [accessed 7 December 2021].

<sup>165</sup> Campbell, 2014.

work moves along in a spiral, consisting of four successive stages (which can be repeated). To quiet the mind and to stimulate our empathy the work starts off with *gratitude*. Through the *honour of our pain* and the courage to feel and becoming sentient beings again, we experience compassion and “the wider reaches of our collective existence”.<sup>166</sup> To honour our pain for the world is also seen as a portal to active engagement in the world's self-healing process.<sup>167</sup> Many scholars (especially women) agree, that we need to honour and re-feel our pain, grief and sorrow.<sup>168</sup> Haraway describes grief with a critter as a path of understanding intertwined common living and dying, as a path of “sustained remembrance” and to the notion that we are in and of the same undoing fabric.<sup>169</sup> The third development phase of the spiral, emerging through the sensation of being part of a wider life, allows us to *see with new eyes*. We feel empowered to co-create life with all our relations, with all species, in past, present, and future. And we are ready to take the last step of the spiral into the action that calls us to implement the Great Turning and *go forth*.<sup>170</sup>

### Source of Life

Our life is built on the totality of all that exists.<sup>171</sup> We are the youngsters, “the newest arrivals on earth”, still learning how to live on this planet.<sup>172</sup> To recognize that our life is depending on the lives of the ones who went before us, can be called an ancestral tradition. In its nature ancestral lineage is animate. This means that everything is alive and therefore in relationship with everything. Our and the universes essence is relational.<sup>173</sup> Different scholars emphasise that is important to differentiate here further, to build upon the image of a web, and therefore to say that “while we may all ultimately be connected to one another, the specificity and proximity of connections matter. ... Life and death happen inside these relationships”.<sup>174</sup> Different scholars have showed that the experience of deep time can

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<sup>166</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*, p. 68.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Macy, Haraway, Wall-Kimmerer, Eisenstein.

<sup>169</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 39.

<sup>170</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*.

<sup>171</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>172</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 205.

<sup>173</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>174</sup> Thom Van Dooren, *Flight Ways, Life And Loss At The Edge Of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 60; Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*; Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*.

change our perception of our role to play here and now.<sup>175</sup> It can give us a glimpse, that all our ancestors allow us to be. It is through their life, presence and gifts are we here, now.

### The Practice of Straying and the Power of Unintentional Doing

In her book *Natur-Dialoge*<sup>176</sup> (Nature-Dialogues) Kreszmeier shows ways of relating under the guiding concept of *Sympoiesis* that contribute to shaping experience and reality in a concrete and earth-centered way. An important practice of her Nature-Dialogues approach is the practice of straying, with all its surprises, wonders and encounters. Straying is a movement in space, without a clear goal, without a clear path, without fleeing from anything. If we manage to let go of any aggressive behaviour of conquering, reaching, or mastering and arrive in being present in the here and now, we will be guided by sensual impulses and the inherent vitality of the spaces can be experienced. What is needed for straying is also the openness to results that Rosa defines as central to experiences of resonance. There is no controlled, planned straying. Therefore, this practice is very compatible with resonance and can remind us of the diverse togetherness of all life.<sup>177</sup> "Stray has the potential to make the magic of the living tangible."<sup>178</sup>

This unintentional doing in an often time-free space is used in various nature-dialogue settings. In classical vision quests or vigils, for example, there is the *threshold walk*, which is similar to the practice of straying.<sup>179</sup> The practice of the *sit spot*, where one regularly stays in the same place in nature, just to be there, also has a similar dimension.<sup>180</sup>

Jon Young describes how important it is to build treads with all beings around us, with all aspects of nature, with the more-than human world just as with ancestors and the unborn. With every encounter, every interaction, question, and story these threads grow thicker and thicker until they become ropes. We need to truly awaken all our senses again; in a degree we

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<sup>175</sup> Campbell, 2014; Stephan Harding, *Animate Earth, Science, Intuition and Gaia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Totnes Devon UK: Green Books, 2009).

<sup>176</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*.

<sup>177</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, pp. 21 – 41.

<sup>178</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 34 [translation by the author].

<sup>179</sup> Ursula and David Seghezzi, *Vom Zauber Der Naturmystik Und Der Dringlichkeit, Dem Leben Zu Dienen* (Germany: van Eck Verlag, 2017) pp. 401 – 419.

<sup>180</sup> Jon Young, *Repairing Emotional Isolation By Reawakening Deep Nature Connection* [video]. 2020 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMWSvUp0CYk&t=358s>> [accessed 18 December 2021].

might have never experienced in the western world so far. The reawakening of that ancient connection leads us to aliveness, presence, empathy, and love.<sup>181</sup>

### Creative Interaction and Ceremony

The birds sing (and so shall we). They proclaim themselves. The active proclaiming ourselves - said the traditions in southern Africa- allows us to be seen. And when we are seen, the soul is validated. This is what we are longing for.<sup>182</sup>

For Campbell (and Eisenstein comes up with very similar findings<sup>183</sup>) it is clear, what the main praxis of a good life and the new story are: *Dance, song, prayer, and sacred ritual*. While story is a part of who we are.<sup>184</sup> Wall Kimmerer has a very similar perception. She describes the importance of ceremonies in beautiful reciprocal words: “To have agency in the world, ceremonies should be reciprocal cocreations, organic in nature, in which the community creates ceremony, and the ceremony creates communities.”<sup>185</sup> These actions can help us remember how to live and die within the new story of interbeing.

### Archaic Simplicity<sup>186</sup>

Kreszmeier and **Hans-Peter Hufenus** (\*1949, Switzerland) dive deep into the research and the reconnection with our ancestors. From the classical stance of compostists, where nature is a living counterpart that communicates with us through its phenomena, Kreszmeier and Hufenus have been researching for decades, inspired by Orixá cosmologies, to re-member the ancient art of communication with all being to create an authentic life. Be it through food and story<sup>187</sup>, ritual, song, dance<sup>188</sup> or elementary prescriptions<sup>189</sup>. In this, everything visible and invisible is permeated by life and sacred forces, the divine is immanent. The goal of the spiritual practice of this earth-connected religious system (Orixá traditions) is to live “the interconnectedness of heaven and earth, of human beings and nature and their animating

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<sup>181</sup> Young, 2020.

<sup>182</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>183</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*.

<sup>184</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>185</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 250.

<sup>186</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 130.

<sup>187</sup> Hans-Peter Hufenus, *Urmensch Feuer Kochen, Die Esskultur Der Frühen Menschheit Mit Rezepten Für Archaisches Kochen* (Aarau & München: AT Verlag, 2021).

<sup>188</sup> Terra Sagrada, *Wanderbewegung Afrikanischer Religionstraditionen* (2021)

<<https://terrasagrada.info/terreiro/tradition-orixas>> [accessed 21 December 2021].

<sup>189</sup> Astrid Habiba Kreszmeier, *Systemische Naturtherapie* (Heidelberg: Carl-Auer, 2008).

destiny”<sup>190</sup>. The same approach Kreszmeier and Hufenus apply in their nature dialogue approaches such as systemic nature therapy and depth mythology. Their sympoietic journey can be treated in three fields: Giving priority to the earthly physical over the spirit. I translate it as *earth-bond* or *earth-relatedness*. The second pillar is the *practice of deep memorization*, in realms of the pre-written, pre and early agrarian cultures. Remembering and embody archaic personhood connects us to experiences, forces and sensations that can be a great pool of resources to melt destructive narrative structures (compare 6.8). We can gain access to an ancient memory archive of confidence and peace.<sup>191</sup> The third and last field is a *circular culture of resonance*. Kreszmeier refers to Rosa's theory (compare 3) with focus on the ability to answer and the openness to surrender to the uncontrollability of the outcome of an experience of resonance. Kreszmeier and I agree that the wisdom around resonance lies in these ancient (nature) traditions. The elders have always had the wisdom that the things that surround us, shape, and influence us. They were still aware about the reciprocity of life (compare 6.4).<sup>192</sup>

Just like a compost, compostists are made up of different elements, different "voices of the earth".<sup>193</sup> Kreszmeier examines these voices in more detail. To better understand she classifies different perspectives: the transcendent, the immanent, the psychological, the political, the progressive and the circular.<sup>194</sup> As in all living systems, diversity is a good sign.<sup>195</sup> Just as there is no such thing as one truth, there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach. In this chapter 4, I presented different compost perspectives, without classification, to sing a lively, loving, and polyphonic melody towards mainstream science.

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<sup>190</sup> Terra Sagrada, *Wanderbewegung Afrikanischer Religionstraditionen*, 2021.

<sup>191</sup> Terra Sagrada, *Orixá-Dialoge*, 2021.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 59.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. pp. 59 – 62.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. p. 59.

## Synthesis

In the preceding chapters I assessed how the late modern subject relates and resonates to the world and what are the causes of it. Even though the words and the focus' chosen by the different scholars vary, the picture of our relationship with the world is rather grim (3.2 and 4.1) and the proposed path to live another way of being-in-the-world goes in a similar direction, albeit with different emphases (3.4 and 4.3).

In the Synthesis I want to find out, whether and how Rosa's theory can be transferred into a resonance practice, and how we can live a good life. To do so, I first need to define the good life in this context (6.1).

## 5 Living a Re-Sounding Life with Vibrating Resonance Wires

Resonance can neither be forced nor prevented with certainty. Thus, resonance cannot be completely reified; luckily the moment of uncontrollability always remains a defining element.<sup>196</sup> In the following, I summarise how I, as an individual, can positively influence my ability to resonate by examining what Rosa says are the prerequisites for this (exceptions reserved). I am not interested in capturing, controlling, and maximising resonance in an aggressive attitude against the world. I am concerned with making the symphony of the world audible again and inspiring our ability to respond by sounding with the world (compare 3.1.2).

Rosa impressively shows how we fail as society (trapped in the logic of escalation) in our attempt to place promises of resonance in the future (like with a bank) by the augmentation of our resource situation and the expansion of "our share of the world"<sup>197</sup>.<sup>198</sup> (compare 3.2) From this I draw the lesson that a resonance relationship can only be established in the here and now, in the present moment. Resonance is and must be free of material or spatial

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<sup>196</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*; Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World*.

<sup>197</sup> Rosa, *The Uncontrollability Of The World*, p. 10.

<sup>198</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, pp. 368 – 377.

resources, I do not need anything for it I do not have here and now.<sup>199</sup> A relationship of resonance is equally available as unavailable. However, besides presence in the here and now, it requires some other internal skills.

I move here on narrow ground. I am investigating a Sociology of Our Relationship to the World and I am asking a psychological question. Rosa states clearly that relations to the world are not a question of cognitive world representation and cannot be limited to individual psychology or can only vary individually to a limited extent.<sup>200</sup> Additionally he admits that next to the contexts, there are conditions in the subjects that make us able to respond or not.<sup>201</sup> It would be thought within the old story of separation, to search the prerequisites only in the world or in the subject. Whether my resonance wires vibrate or not does not simply depend on me, nor does it simply depend on the other person/environment, nor on the constitution. It is a dynamic happening in between, an interaction, a relationship. The in-between shapes and influences both sides, therefore Rosa names his work a Sociology of our relationship to the world.<sup>202</sup> So, there are always at least three involved parts: the world/ the vis-à-vis, the subject and the relation. Kreszmeier would add, that nothing happens without the place where we are right now<sup>203</sup> and for the theme-centred interaction (TCI) there is always a globe around an encounter<sup>204</sup>. In the following I focus on the aspects of the subject.

Intrinsic interests and self-efficacy are basic requirements to establish vibrating resonance wires. Social recognition has a positive influence on both and when they are both in a healthy state you experience “the world as a field of exciting challenges and alluring possibilities”.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. pp. 368 – 377.

<sup>201</sup> Hielscher, *Hotel Matze*, 2020.

<sup>202</sup> Hielscher, *Hotel Matze*, 2020.

<sup>203</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*, p. 13.

<sup>204</sup> Wikipedia, *Themenzentrierte Interaktion* (2021)

<[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Themenzentrierte\\_Interaktion](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Themenzentrierte_Interaktion)> [accessed 27 December 2021].

<sup>205</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 9.

## 5.1 Intrinsic Interests

Blocked resonance axes lead to alienation. A vibrating resonance wire between us and the world is formed by intrinsic interests (*libido*).<sup>206</sup> When we have an interest in something for their own sake, because we like and love it.<sup>207</sup> Scientific studies have shown, that setting achievable proximal subgoals strengthens our intrinsic interests, our self-motivation, and our experience of self-efficacy.<sup>208</sup> These values are interconnected.<sup>209</sup> It is the subgoal accomplishments, the perceived competence that can lead to an increase in intrinsic interest.<sup>210</sup> Bandura assumes that there is a temporal lag between the strengthening of intrinsic interests (slower) and of self-efficacy.<sup>211</sup>

## 5.2 Self-Efficacy

To learn and to be able to enter relationship it is also needed that we believe in our own self-efficacy. To establish resonance wires, we must feel that we can *attain* or *affect* our vis-à-vis and we are open and accessible to be *touched* ourselves (compare 3.1.2).<sup>212</sup> Psychological procedures can strengthen your self-efficacy and your creative self-beliefs in general.<sup>213</sup> Scientific studies show that a high expectation of one's own self-efficacy strengthens one's coping behaviour, tasks are tackled with less effort and more perseverance, and the defensive behaviour in unknown situations is reduced.<sup>214</sup> Methods to strengthen self-efficacy different scholars name are “vicarious experience”, “physiological and affective states”, “integration of efficacy information” and verbal encouragement in form of expressed faith in my capabilities

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid. p. 163.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>208</sup> Albert Bandura and Dale H. Schunk, ‘Cultivating Competence, Self-Efficacy, And Intrinsic Interest Through Proximal Self-Motivation’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41.3 (1981): 586-598 <DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.41.3.586> p. 586.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. p. 595.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. p. 587.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. p. 597.

<sup>212</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, pp. 158 – 164; 174.

<sup>213</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 164; Maciej Karwowski and James C. Kaufman (ed.), *The Creative Self: Effect Of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, And Identity* (London, San Diego, Cambridge and Oxford: Academic Press, 2017); Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise Of Control* (New York: W. H. Freeman & Co, 1997); Albert Bandura, ‘Self-Efficacy: Toward A Unifying Theory Of Behavioral Change’, *Psychological Review*, 84.2 (1977): 191- 215 <DOI: 10.1037//0033-295x.84.2.191>.

<sup>214</sup> Bandura, ‘Self-Efficacy: Toward A Unifying Theory Of Behavioral Change’.

through others or self-affirming beliefs.<sup>215</sup>

In our context it is central, that self-efficacy is a loving one and experienced in a “resonance-sensitive sense”. When we use it as reifying control within the old story to dominate our relationships, it is not a contribution to a singing world.<sup>216</sup>

Low self-efficacy expectations lead under challenging conditions to increased anxiety and vice versa. According to neuropsychological findings, both a low self-efficacy and anxiety and stress directly reduce the ability to resonate.<sup>217</sup> It is therefore doubly important to consciously nourish and strengthen one's self-efficacy and apply techniques to reduce stress and fear. This example illustrates how inextricably linked “the cognitive/evaluative and bodily/affective dimensions of our relationship to the world” are.<sup>218</sup>

### 5.3 The Path from Fear to Love

As described in the chapter 3.2, our growth, acceleration, and innovation orientated society is pushed through the fear of losing something and through the hope that through the expansion of our share of the world the future becomes better than the present. Further it is often described that the logic of escalation is also a cause of our inability to face and stand our pain. Many scholars and especially Macy, see in this inability also a driving force of our immense overconsumption. We try to plug the lack of our presence, self-care and self-love with matter, special vacations, seminars, further development, consumer goods and all sorts of distraction, because we have never learned and are afraid of just being present with what is and really listen.<sup>219</sup> We switch on our machine self in the morning and are driven through the day by the fear of stopping because we are always in a competitive situation and the escalator is constantly moving down.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise Of Control*, pp. 79 – 115; Karwowski and Kaufman (ed.), *The Creative Self*.

<sup>216</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*.

<sup>217</sup> Albert Bandura, ‘Perceived Self-Efficacy In Cognitive Development And Functioning’, *Educational Psychologist*, 28.2 (1993): 117-148 <DOI: 10.1207/s15326985ep2802\_3>, p. 133; Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 164.

<sup>218</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 164.

<sup>219</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*; Campbell, 2014.

<sup>220</sup> Campbell, 2014; Rosa, *Resonance*.

Anxiety and lack of time are two aspects that make it very difficult to enter a resonant relationship with anything and as neuropsychological research showed, they also limit our capacity of empathy. When I am afraid, worried or in pain, I also close myself off quite physically. I do not want to be touched because that could lead to wounding.<sup>221</sup> Resistance to what is, and fear make resonance impossible. The ability to deeply be and stay present with an emotion, a feeling and to surrender to the present moment, to observe it out of a non-judgmental space is culturally unknown for us. We judge everything and always, often most harshly ourselves, because we believe that this is the best way to optimize ourselves. A very efficient way to step out of the common aggressive, reifying relationship to the world (3.2) is to learn to show up to yourself again, perceive your feelings, stay present and maybe to articulate and share them honestly with others. A good toolbox for this is the work that reconnects and many meditation practises.<sup>222</sup> Also the practice of straying, the sit spot or any method that interrupts the aggressive attitude of execution can provide benefit (compare 3.4, 4.3 and 4.3)

### Letting go of the Aggressive World Relationship

It is important to move the world out of the point of aggression, i.e., to enter a new relationship to the world<sup>223</sup>, enter the new story of interbeing<sup>224</sup>. This can start in the subject but cannot be fulfilled alone. It is a group, community, and society work.<sup>225</sup> What we can take response-ability for is our well-being, our hygiene of thoughts, what we are and what we do. When we perceive the world out of a peaceful, confident being with high experience of our self-efficacy (5.2), we perceive a different world (3.1.1).

Openness, self-efficacy, confidence, and courage to enter a transformative experience and humility and gratitude that not everything is under my control cannot be bought (compare 3.1.5), but I truly believe that they can be nourished through our narratives, our thoughts, affirmations, rituals, and actions.

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<sup>221</sup> Hielscher, *Hotel Matze*, 2020.

<sup>222</sup> Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*.

<sup>223</sup> Rosa, *Uncontrollability of the World*.

<sup>224</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*; Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgras*.

<sup>225</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*; Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgras*.

## 6 Living a Good Life

### 6.1 The Definition of a Good Life

Rosa wrote his book *Resonance* as a contribution to a sociology of the good life.<sup>226</sup> Just as resonance is not understood as an emotional state in this work, also the good life is defined within this mode of relation, it is defined as “neutral with respect to emotional content”.<sup>227</sup> The basic requirements to establish vibrating resonance wires (described in chapter 3.1.5 and 5) also applies to the good life. Further resonance becomes a key category to measure the good life.<sup>228</sup> To implement the compostists view of granting all possible counterparts their own voice on an equal footing, I step radically into the story of interbeing<sup>229</sup>. I take the resonance theory with me while I am officially letting go of the classical western scientific mechanical worldview. I add to the sociology of the good life approaches of an ecology, philosophy, psychology, cosmology and re-story-ation of the good life.

To live a good life means to be sounding with the world. To be sounding with the world means to be in an open, vulnerable, and self-loving state. To be in that state means to be present and free. To be present and free means to be love. A good life is defined in this dissertation as a life with an almost libidinal connection to everything we encounter and interact with (3.1.1), a life in healthy intact attuned relations with the world (including all beings, times, and dimensions), “more capable of surprise, more able to practice the arts of living and dying well in multispecies symbiosis (and) sympoiesis, ... on a damaged planet”<sup>230</sup>. It is a life where we know what we can be, (which is for the indigenous ceremonial leader Arkan Lushwala the most important question in life)<sup>231</sup> and where we know what we can give in reciprocity for all the treasure we have been given<sup>232</sup>. A good life is a life where our attention lies on the connections in between, where my resonance wires vibrate, able to send and receive in a vivid loving grateful energy.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 2.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.* p. 174.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 39; 171; 184.

<sup>229</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*.

<sup>230</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 98.

<sup>231</sup> Pachamama Alliance, *Arkan Lushwala, Who You Are* [video]. 2019 <<https://vimeo.com/348918132>> [accessed 28 October 2021].

<sup>232</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

<sup>233</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*; Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

The following modest compilation with the key aspects of 'how to live a good life' is based on an organic mode of relation with the world. I am totally aware that the good life happens in the network of relationships and does not (only) depend on the individual (compare discussion about this issue in the introduction to chapter 5).<sup>234</sup> Rosa is critical of advice that focuses on the individual. He is very critical with the attitude based on 'the law of resonance' (3.1.3) because he perceives a reifying intention. Resonance is connecting with an unavailable other. An encounter with a counterpart that cannot be controlled, seen through or 100% controlled.

Rosa quotes, that as a culture, as human beings, we lose the ability to connect with another in a way that touches and transforms us. We remain on the surface, it quickly becomes boring and that is why we change the contact (new instrument, new holiday destination etc.) and try our luck again. I believe to understand his point, nevertheless my answer is different. To enter a new story and leave the deadening mechanical behind, I am ready to explore what strengthens my "ability to live in connection with animals, plants and all of nature and to treat them with care" which is, also for Martha Nussbaum, an essential prerequisite for leading a good life.<sup>235</sup> I am ready to explore different ways of being human, ready to re-connect, to remember, and ready to face the primal questions: *What can I be?*<sup>236</sup>, *What are my gifts?*<sup>237</sup>, *Who are you?* and *Who are we?* As shown in chapter 4.3 there are manifold ways to be, think, communicate, and nourish the connections and stories that sustain our lives. There are many possibilities to *be beauty together* for good in the world. There are many chances to build kinship<sup>238</sup>, and dive into realms of deep memorization<sup>239</sup>. My analysis showed that the following aspects of this compilation can support and encourage this transformation. They are invitations to find our way back to attuned relations (including all beings, times, and dimensions). They nourish our ability to relate and can nourish and deepen specific relationships.

In the story of interbeing a performed ritual can be the expression of my tone added to the symphony of the relationship *with* the world.

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<sup>234</sup> Hielscher, *Hotel Matze*, 2020.

<sup>235</sup> Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Gerechtigkeit Oder Das Gute Leben* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), p. 201.

<sup>236</sup> Pachamama Alliance, 2019.

<sup>237</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

<sup>238</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*.

<sup>239</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*.

## 6.2 The Power of Gratitude & Gift Economy

It was the power, beauty and depth of an indigenous prayer that so deeply touched me 20 years ago, that I write here about it. It was the first time in my life, at this shamanic sweat lodge ceremony in England, where I could experience deep into my bones what *real gratitude* means. It is a gratitude of interbeing. For some indigenous peoples in North America, is “The Words That Come Before All Else”, a prayer of gratitude practiced every day in the morning, a deeply ingrained custom.<sup>240</sup>

There are many traditions and studies which emphasise the power of gratitude. It quiets our minds, reconnects us to source and supports us to be truly present in our bodies, in the here and now. For Macy, gratitude is the source of all religions. With a portion of thankfulness for life our tasks progress much more in ease, we get connected with our deeper powers and become more resilient. The greatest speciality of gratitude is its freedom of external circumstances, we receive just through a decision and through practise to strengthen the thankfulness within, the most important message: ‘we are sufficient, ‘there is nothing out there what we need to transform our life in a good one’.<sup>241</sup>

For Eisenstein the age of Separation, as our civilization's basic dichotomies come to an end. Hence also the division “between money exchanges and gifts”. It is important to relearning the culture of the gift and that we enable the “spirit of the gift” to flow into human economy.<sup>242</sup> Also Rosa stands in for a paradigm shift to relieve our economic system from this fierce competition and the logic of escalation. He sees the way in the “guaranteed basic income without preconditions”.<sup>243</sup> In a highly competitive environment, it is irrational to engage in resonance.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Joanna Macy, *World As Lover, World As Self, Courage For Global Justice And Planetary Awakening*, ed. by Stephanie Kaza, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edn. (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 2021) p. 24.

<sup>241</sup> Macy, *World As Lover, World As Self*, pp. 19 – 31; Macy and Brown, *Coming Back To Life*, pp. 91 – 103.

<sup>242</sup> Charles, Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics, Money, Gift & Society In The Age Of Transition* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2021) [Revised eBook Version], Chapter 18, Relearning Gift Culture.

<sup>243</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 438.

<sup>244</sup> Hielscher, *Hotel Matze*, 2020.

It is not possible to just change in a gift economy in the west. As Wall Kimmerer shows, our understanding of a gift is very expanded:

“... in the gift economy, gifts are not free. The essence of the gift is that it creates a set of relationships. The currency of a gift economy is, at its root, reciprocity. In Western thinking, private land is understood to be a “bundle of rights,” whereas in a gift economy property has a “bundle of responsibilities” attached.”<sup>245</sup>

So, the gift economy the relationship and the understanding of responsibility and reciprocity are closely related.

### 6.3 Response-Ability

Response-ability in both senses (ability for response and for responsibility<sup>246</sup>) is crucial, both for a resonance event and for a good life. I love how the German language expresses this in the same word "Ver-Antwort-ung".

Taylor wrote 1989 that it would significantly help to avoid ecological disasters “if we could recover a sense of the demand that our natural surrounding and wilderness make on us”.<sup>247</sup> I read in his words both “the task is to become capable [...] of response”<sup>248</sup> and the ability to step into our responsibility to add our gift to the community of life. As mentioned above, the central criterion of the better world is listening and responding.<sup>249</sup>

Wall Kimmerer elaborates the indigenous understanding of responsibility beautifully:

“One of our responsibilities as human people is to find ways to enter into reciprocity with the more-than-human world. We can do it through gratitude, through ceremony, through land stewardship, science, art, and in everyday acts of practical reverence.”<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, pp. 28, 22 – 32.

<sup>246</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*.

<sup>247</sup> Taylor, *Sources Of The Self*, p. 513.

<sup>248</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 1.

<sup>249</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 459.

<sup>250</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 190.

## 6.4 Reciprocity

Good coexistence here on earth and reciprocity lives from the fact that we allow life to have its own liveliness.<sup>251</sup> For Kreszmeier it is important to recognize the reciprocity between all beings and between people and things and between people and spaces. It is very central for our identity that we have forgotten the sensual experience of being looked at by this world. Our idea that only we look at this world (from the inside out) is false.<sup>252</sup> I remember well how in the training in Systemic Nature Therapy we did an exercise where we turned our idea of looking around. It was not anymore that our energy flows out to the next tree but that the energy of the tree flows inside me. It was an experience of a very sensual soft mutual encounter. This reciprocity that happens not only between people plays a decisive role in determining what we do, it shapes relationships and realities.<sup>253</sup>

For Haraway it is not about hope or despair but about “staying with the trouble requires making oddkin; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all.”<sup>254</sup>

## 6.5 Be-Holding Love and Fear, Be-holding Death

I have recognized the importance of the ability to be and stay truly present in different chapters in this work (5.3 and 6.2). For Haraway this is one central point what “staying with the trouble” requires.<sup>255</sup> To stay truly present means as well to face your fears, to stop trying to scare them away through distraction and to enter a new relationship with yourself and this experience we call life. It is an important step out of the logic of escalation. To stop to run away. There are many important questions to ask ourselves (4.3 and 6.1). It is central to know what we can be and to define what it means to live a good life.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Terra Sagrada, *Orixá-Dialogue*, 2021.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 4.

<sup>255</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, p. 1.

<sup>256</sup> Macy, *Active Hope*, Chapter 12: Maintaining Energy And Enthusiasm.

## Who Am I?

Charles Taylor's philosophical anthropology and Rosa's resonance theory gained the basic insight that without the conception of a (resonant) counterpart we are hardly capable of determining ourselves and developing our own identity.<sup>257</sup> As described in the chapter 3.2 all the structural elements of modernity but mainly the cultural fact of open ethical horizons and ethical privatization do not ease our determination of "one's purpose in life".<sup>258</sup> When we continue with our life in a rat race running away from our deepest fears, we will not be able to hold and perceive a space, nor for resonance or alienation, nor fear or love. Nor will we be able to sustain a "regular contact with the tangible ground and sky" as Abram proposes in 4.3.<sup>259</sup>

To train the practice of the arts of living and dying well in multispecies symbiosis (and) sympoiesis we need to show up vulnerable, present, open and in a self-loving state to the place and the landscape where we are<sup>260</sup>, to the beings which are with us, to the elements and all times we are embedded in. As discussed in 3.3 there is a 'voice of nature' and an 'inner nature' we can get in touch and in relation to.

One step that must be made within our inner nature is to let go of judgment, finding true compassion for what there is. It is the step out of the aggressive, mechanical story of separation into the story of interbeing. Eisenstein very movingly points out in his book *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible* (in chapter 25 Judgement) what it needs to enter the new story, because the daily practice of "judgement is separation".<sup>261</sup>

## Being Alive in a Finite Body

One other vital question is how we relate to the passages we go through from birth to death.<sup>262</sup> Whereas the question how we relate to death is out of my personal perspective the core question of modernity. If we ignore and fight the fact of that transformation where a dying organism becomes part of the wider life that surrounds it<sup>263</sup>, the fact of the finiteness of

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<sup>257</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 270; Taylor, *Sources Of The Self*.

<sup>258</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 22.

<sup>259</sup> Abram, *The Spell Of The Sensuous*, p. 9.

<sup>260</sup> Böhme, *The Aesthetics Of Atmospheres*; Gebhard, *Kind Und Natur* and Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialoge*.

<sup>261</sup> Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*, Chapter 25: Judgement.

<sup>262</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>263</sup> Abram, *Spell Of The Sensuous*.

the body composition we are now, try to get rid of this frame condition and treat it as the worst that can happen, we will not be able to live a good life. It is like going for a swim without accepting to become wet. We would always be deep within accompanied by fear, resistance, and horror. As shown in 5.3 they are counterparts to the ability for resonance. If death does not flow into the analysis of our being and our relationship with the world, a theory can never be complete.<sup>264</sup> The examination of death and its influence on our being in the world is something I truly miss in Rosa's theory (3.5).

As Bauman impressively developed, the challenge to live with the knowledge of mortality (and the inability to “unknow” or forget it) is the primary trait of the human species. In his view, to enable us to live with the fact of mortality, we must suppress the odour of this knowledge by a stronger one. Culture, another 'human only' feature, has been a technique for such suppression since its existence.<sup>265</sup> I truly believe that a compostists way of being with that odour exists other than suppression, named relation. All aspects named in this compilation chapter support our ability to relate.

## 6.6 Dance, Song, Prayer and Sacred Ritual

In 4.3 I described important aspects for a better world. Here I would like to emphasize their importance once again. Dance, song, prayer and sacred ritual are ways of the vital communication with the more-than-human world (including all beings, places, times, and dimensions), ways to nourish our sense of interbeing and ways to express and strengthen gratitude, love, self-efficacy, response-ability and reciprocity.<sup>266</sup> They can be manifestation of engaged and concrete, emotionally significant interactions with nature which sustain our resonant relationship.<sup>267</sup> They also can support us profoundly going through severe life passages.<sup>268</sup> They are what makes the difference between us and a machine: relation care.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Gebhart, *Kind und Natur*, pp. 6, 261 – 287.

<sup>265</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality And Other Life Strategies* (Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>267</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 273; Gebhard, *Kind Und Natur*, pp. 5, 51–77; Böhme, *The Aesthetics Of Atmospheres*.

<sup>268</sup> Campbell, 2014.

<sup>269</sup> Campbell, 2014.

“It is human perception that makes the world a gift”<sup>270</sup> and through ritual we can guide our awareness.

In my work as an outdoor guide and systemic nature therapist, I honour the practice of deep remembrance. It is the effect of simple archaic elementary experiences (like tending a fire, sleeping on a thin mat in the woods or taking a bath in wild waters) that nourish me in my whole being. I am convinced that these simple, earthy activities massively support us in walking the path of the story of interbeing.

### Enter the Timeless Flow of Joy

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi studied for over two decades the golden mean between boredom and fear. Those states, he named them flow, are where we feel deep enjoyment and concentration in one.<sup>271</sup> In his book ‘Flow, the Psychology of Happiness’ his research uncovered that the effect of flow includes a deep joy to be alive, to experience life as worthwhile and encounters as truly fulfilling. In that state our resonance wires are vibrantly active, we are open and safe to relate. Art and beauty (also within dance, song, ritual, or prayer) can as well be gateways into unintended timeless action, into a straying mode of natural flow in deep connection.

## 6.7 Language

The compostists agree that the mechanical worldview is also expressed in our anthropocentric languages. Swimme and Berry are committed to “an Earth-centered language”.<sup>272</sup> Wall Kimmerer describes the haughtiness of English as that being a human is the only possible way to be animate, deserving of respect and moral concern.<sup>273</sup>

Abram is expert in the perception of the more-than-human world. For him the images we live after are important. For example, he emphasises the importance of the realisation and

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<sup>270</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 30.

<sup>271</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom And Anxiety, The Experience Of Play In Work And Games* (San Francisco & London: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, 1975).

<sup>272</sup> Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story: From The Primordial Flaring Forth To The Ecozoic Era – A Celebration Of The Unfolding Of The Cosmos* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), p. 258.

<sup>273</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 57.

sensation of our embeddedness. We live *in* the earth, not on the earth. The air, the sky and the clouds are part of the earth as well.<sup>274</sup>

It is crucially important, within the extinction of the last striking animistic indigenous languages, to go through the spiral of the work that reconnects (4.3) to take a step back and become aware of the cruelty of modern languages and walk with the question how we can speak in an animistic way. To speak in a language does not give us permission to act in its narratives and disrespect the more-than-human world. We need to transform our relationship with the world also through our language, through the way we speak with our counterpart and the way we refer to other beings, places and land.<sup>275</sup>

## 6.8 Narratives, Cosmologies, and the Stories we tell Ourselves

Our way of relating and therefore the quality of our life is defined by the stories we live after and by several established ideas and values, the paradigm who lie beyond our existence (compare 4.1). Rosa and the compostists agree on the relational and narrative (Rosa calls it a lack of “conceptual means”<sup>276</sup>) origin of the (ecological) crisis.

The Iroquois creation myth, the story of the skywoman, tells a story of generously shared co-creation of all species. It tells about where they came from, how they can go forward and the response-ability that flows between humans and the earth. The stories that are gifted from one generation to the next, guide the indigenous Potawatomi people through their relationship with nature and the world.<sup>277</sup> “Like Creation stories everywhere, cosmologies are a source of identity and orientation to the world. They tell us who we are.” They inevitably shape us, no matter how present we carry them with us in our everyday life or not.<sup>278</sup>

There are many different stories and narratives that coin our existence and all our relationships “through and with other stories”.<sup>279</sup> The story, the worldview is like a lens through which we create reality. Good questions to deal with different stories is to ask what it reveals and what it hides, further it is worthful to ask who I become looking through this lens.

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<sup>274</sup> Abram, 2018.

<sup>275</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; Harvey, *An Introduction To Animism And Indigenous Religion*, 2017.

<sup>276</sup> Rosa, *Resonance*, p. 274.

<sup>277</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>279</sup> Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 97.

Abram and Eisenstein are sure that myth sustain life. We become the lens we choose to some extent.<sup>280</sup>

For Kreszmeier, a practice of deep remembrance supports the “melting of destructive narrative structures”.<sup>281</sup> Gary Nabhan wrote that “we cannot meaningfully proceed with healing, with restoration, without *re-story-ation*”.<sup>282</sup> Truth is what holds us in a right relationship to the real and its wonder.<sup>283</sup> Listening to the stories of the land and answer similar questions I proposed in 6.1 are vital for the process of re-story-ation, to enter the narratives of a good life. In what kind of world do we want to live in? Which story is in alignment with who I want to become?<sup>284</sup>

Abram also perceives a warped perception and wrong verbal expression in many notions in modern times. In Abram’s view the earth is going to suffer, if we think in the narrative of the good in the luminous, transcendent sky with the sun, and of the bad and evil at the heart of the earth, the centre of gravity. The earth is filled with weight, shadow, density, and solidity; properties we judge as bad (5.3 and 6.5). Abram proposes to train to sense the attraction of the two bodies again and perceiving gravity as an act of eros.<sup>285</sup>

The most basic story that lies at the heart of our relationship with the world, is our breath. The air is inextricably linked to awareness, to the psyche and the mind. In the view of (at least some) compostists they are not inside us; we are inside them. Within this perception it becomes clear that mind has no exclusively human property. We are “bodily immersed in an awareness that is not ours but is rather the Earth's.”<sup>286</sup>

As Wall Kimmerer “I dream of a world guided by a lens of stories rooted in the revelations of science and framed with an indigenous worldview—stories in which matter and spirit are both given voice.”<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> David Abram and Charles Eisenstein, *Animate Earth Dialogs - Episode 02 - Charles Eisenstein* [video]. 2020 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NGjf-6RYos>> [accessed 23 December 2021].

<sup>281</sup> Kreszmeier, *Natur-Dialogue*, p. 65 [translation by the author]

<sup>282</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 9.

<sup>283</sup> Abram and Eisenstein, 2020.

<sup>284</sup> Abram and Eisenstein, 2020.

<sup>285</sup> Abram, 2018.

<sup>286</sup> Abram, 2014.

<sup>287</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 346.

## 7 Conclusion – Weaving Life in Resonance

Resonance is an original encounter with life. It is a moment where I feel connected to the universe, connected to the earth. It is a space where I am part of life, part of history, where I may feel the ancestors in my back, the air in my lungs, the blood in my veins, the female fire in my lower abdomen and the earth in my bones. It is a being present, being elemental, aligned and connected. The response-ability lived in these moments, fills me with gratitude. I feel in relationship, and this feels as bliss.

Haraway often writes of *weaving* in her book *Staying with the Trouble*.<sup>288</sup> Also for Carolyn Hillyer is weaving an important term.<sup>289</sup> It is more, it is even a way of life in the attitude of weaving. Weaving is relating. You cannot weave alone. Weaving is connecting. Responding. To express yourself in action, in an inner attitude of interconnectedness. You cannot weave without dialoguing, without being present.

To weave life in resonance can be a moment of deep touch through music. As just now, a ‘random’ played song of my music programme, let the tears roll over my cheeks. Let these lines appear on the paper. It is a Nordic archaic song. It is a song, the words my head does not understand, but my soul is in resonance with it. An old realm of connection and longing is touched. It is a song from the distant far North, which at the same time comes from inside of me. My response to this song is tears, a deep feeling of connection. Is my response resonance? Yes! And it is part of a good life! It is the openness and the courage to be touched, to feel, deep within, to surrender to the present moment without having control, to be vulnerable and allow deep memorization.

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<sup>288</sup> Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*.

<sup>289</sup> Carolyn Hillyer, *Weavers’ Oracle, Journey Cards & Travel Guide* (Postbridge, Devon: Seventh Wave Books, 2016).

They are small moments of encounter that reward days of perseverance. I have experienced such moments of encounter with trees, the moon, the wind, and the rain. I experience the good life when I surrender to life without expectation, vulnerable and naked. When I show up to life in this very moment as the person I can be, ready to “reconsider the place of humans in the natural world”<sup>290</sup>, ready to restore the way I relate in respect, responsibility, and reciprocity, ready to nourish the story of interbeing.

I am ready to be “humble enough to listen”<sup>291</sup>  
to listen to my tone  
to feel my tone  
to be my tone  
vibrating.

I am ready to be “humble enough to listen”<sup>292</sup>  
to listen to all the voices around me  
to feel their song  
to be my gift  
to sound in the compost symphony of the world  
with all my relations  
in deep gratitude  
in resonance –  
in love.

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<sup>290</sup> Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 218.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* p. 333.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.* p. 333.

I close my dissertation with a deep breath and a moment of silence.

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