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# Dancing in God in an Accelerating Secular World: Resonating with Kierkegaard's Critical Philosophical Theology

**Curtis L. Thompson**

Religion Department, Thiel College, Greenville, PA 16125, USA; cthompson@thiel.edu

**Abstract:** This essay seeks to scrutinize Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology. The intent is to demonstrate how his religious thought, especially on God's relation to the world and to the human being, can contribute to generating a cogent response to the challenges presented by our accelerating secular world. Apart from the narrative on the Dane's passionate reflections, I employ two other narratives to facilitate this inquiry into Kierkegaard. The first of these facilitating narratives comes from highlighting the work on the concept of resonance by the social theorist Hartmut Rosa. Rosa's rich analysis of our contemporary situation provides a persuasive case for the accelerating pace of our secular world, the complex dynamics of alienation that are at play within it, and the need for social transformation that creates space for increasing resonance within personal and social relationships and structures. The second facilitating narrative centers on the notion of dancing in God, which I believe holds promise for effectively communicating moving, bodily, rhythmic, passionate, and responsive thoughts and actions concerning God's engagement in our contemporary world. I hope to show that these three complementary discourses together provide a provocative religious discourse and vision that can prove helpful in addressing many of the challenges of our time.

**Keywords:** Kierkegaard; forgiveness; Rosa; resonance; alienation; dancing in God

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Three considerations come into play in the writing of this paper. First, I want to focus on Søren Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology. A key theme in that investigation will be the relation of God to the world. Second, I want to highlight the work on the concept of resonance by the social theorist Hartmut Rosa. I think his reflections on a sociology of our relation to the world are relevant to the inquiry into Kierkegaard. Third, I hope that exploring a possible rapprochement between Rosa and Kierkegaard will shed light on the theme of dancing in God, which I take to be worth probing as a valuable theological motif around which to generate a cogent response to the challenges presented by our accelerating secular world. I will treat each of these three considerations in the reverse order of their introductory appearance here.

## 1. Dancing in God

### 1.1. God and the World

The notion of dancing in God has a better chance of making sense if it is considered from a theo-philosophical perspective in which the world is thought of as residing in God. The theist claims to affirm the reality of God and the atheist rejects making such an affirmation. The theist's position is further clarified, though, with the response given to the question of God's relation to the world. The theist who is a pantheist responds that God and the world are one and the same. The theist who is a panentheist responds that God and the world are distinguished but that the world is in God. The theist who is a pantransentheist responds that God and the world are distinguished but that the world is in God, and the world is being transformed in God[1]. These three forms of theism are quite different from one another, and the difference lies in the answer given to the question concerning the nature of the relation of God to the world.

The ultra-orthodox theist, such as one might find in a staunch Calvinist, would likely want nothing to do with any of these three "pan" views. She would contend that assuming the pantheist stance essentially undermines the theistic stance, because part of affirming the reality of God is affirming certain attributes of God; and among the most important attributes are God's aseity and God's sovereignty, which disappear, according to this theist's mind, when God is equated with the world as in the case of pantheism. The panentheist's view might be a little less objectionable to the ultra-orthodox theist, but even that perspective would be regarded as affirming an overly cozy God–world relation and granting too much parity to the world in relation to God. The trans aspect or transformative movement incorporated in pantransentheism might have a certain appeal for the ultra-orthodox theist because it provides some capacity for accommodating revelatory and redemptive divine activities, but here too the world is simply taken too seriously and given too dignified a status as free over against God, so that the divine dominance and control is placed at too much risk. The bottom line, then, is that—while pantheism is sometimes charged with being an acosmism, or of stressing so strongly God as the one and only reality that the genuinely independent status of finite objects and events is jeopardized and the reality of the cosmos or the world is thereby not fully affirmed—we see that it is actually ultra-orthodox theism that falls guilty to the charge of being acosmic.

I endorse the relative validity of both pantheism and panentheism but find pantransentheism, which incorporates many of the fine features of pantheism and panentheism into its compass, to be the most comprehensive and relatively adequate model of the God–world relation. The "trans" or transformational element of pantransentheism accommodates dynamic divine action or movement within the world that is in God. This God of creative transformative movement or activity is a God who dances. Thoughts developed in relation to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity can be utilized in thinking about the dancing God, although the relevant scope of such emergent threefold language need not be limited to Christianity but can be seen as applying to numerous religions. Thus, we can say that this God who dances can be envisioned in a threefold way in terms of God as Cosmic Dancer, as Christic Dance, and as Communal Dancing. The purpose of this threefold God who dances is to lovingly call, summon, plead, appeal, bid, cajole, coax, persuade, welcome, inveigle, entice, tempt, seduce, attract, invite, and lure the world into becoming like God. (The dancing God is very flexible and resourceful in finding the appropriate way to invite a particular person or segment of the world to dance). The world becomes like the God who dances when it dances in God, that is, when its dancing is in sync with or resonates with the dancing God[2]. I should state at the outset that, while in this essay I will find leanings toward a pantransentheistic position in Kierkegaard, making the case for his having assumed that stance cannot be undertaken here.

### *1.2. Types of Dancing*

If dancing in God is to be taken as a serious theological motif, then the reality of dance must be regarded as including both physical dance and metaphorical dance. Physical dance surely refers to what we generally understand as the dance types of ballet, contemporary, jazz, ballroom, rock, hip-hop, and folk, but it also refers to hundreds of particular dances that are danced in specific cultural or social settings around the world. Such physical dancing is what most people think of when they hear the word "dance". However, physical dance could also refer to movements of physical objects that assume the form of dance, even though such formed movements are not intentionally created by centers of consciousness. One can think of a babbling brook whose water is dancing over rocks protruding from the water; the measured flow of blood in the human body that dances rhythmically through the veins and arteries with precision adequate to sustain the organism whether sleeping or wide awake; or the dancing that goes on at the physical level of atoms and molecules whose elementary particles are able to constitute larger corporeal structures through their forces working in harmonious conjunction to create enough stability or permanence of form to sustain the process transpiring in, with, and under their generative patterns. Countless

instances of this sort of physical dancing surround us even though an awareness of this dancing usually eludes us.

The value of dance as a theological motif is not fully recognized if the other side of dance is not acknowledged. Besides physical dance, the theological thinker must also appreciate the importance of metaphorical dance. A metaphor possesses the power to extend our understanding of physical dance to another setting in which there is no physical dance. A metaphor is a figure of speech whereby a word that does not actually apply to a situation is nevertheless applied to that situation, resulting in that situation coming to point to and participate in the original figure of speech. "Book" becomes a metaphorical figure of speech when it is applied not to "pages bound into a volume" but to the actions of my beloved about whom I say, "her movements are a book" (disclosing the truth, beauty, and goodness of my beloved). Many thoughtful people are not willing to entertain language about God and even less so language of an agential God or a God who is active in the world. A good portion of those thoughtful people who are willing to entertain language about God and even of an agential God are rather quick to stipulate that all language about God is metaphorical. Surely language of a dancing God is metaphorical. However, as one who would like to be included in the category of thoughtful people willing to entertain and affirm language about God and of an agential God, I want to affirm that metaphorical language about God need not be understood as precluding the physical dancing of God. It seems that for God to have real effects on the world, there must be a sense in which the efficacious movements of God's dancing are physical at least in the sense of making an impression on physical reality. Our language of a dancing God is metaphorical, but the dancing of this God must at one level or another impact or influence physical reality. The question is, can metaphors have a genuinely efficacious impact on the real world? I would guess that most readers of this volume or of most any other type of literature would agree that they can.

### *1.3. Elements of Dance*

Dancing, as I have come to understand it, can be generally characterized by five features or as being constituted by five elements. First, dancing includes movement. This movement can be highly structured or choreographed, or it can be extremely unstructured or spontaneous, but if it is dancing it will incorporate movement. Not all movement is dance, but all dance involves movement. However, dance's movement, even when it is extremely unstructured or spontaneous, always includes some form. Even free-form dance—where the dancer dances improvisationally, with no planned steps or moves, no purposive choreographic goal to express—is not without any form, for as the dance is executed there are forms or patterns that can be discerned in the movement. Even utterly chaotic dancing assumes the form of chaotic dancing. Dance, as dynamic, therefore, always includes movement, but that movement gives expression to forms or patterns. Hegel identifies *energeia*, or actuality, as the central notion of Aristotle's metaphysics, along with the term *dunamis*, or potentiality, which he understands as the capacity to take on form[3]. The theologian Paul Tillich spoke of the ontological polarity between dynamics and form, with dynamics expressing the vitality of meontic non-being or real possibility and form expressing the essence or definite power of being that makes a thing what it is [4] (vol. I, pp. 178–179). We see that polarity at play in this first feature of dance.

Second, dancing is bodily. The movement of dance is generated by the body. Dance is embodied. It happens through the bodily energy and bodily expressions enabling the moving actions of the dancer. The body is the prime mover of dance's motions. Some of us are less agile, nimble, and sprightly when it comes to our bodily capacity for moving; but dance never encounters a body it does not find adequate for dancing in one or another shape or form. Dancing as bodily can surely be informed by thoughts and ideas of the mind. There is, though, a bodily-grounded form of cognitive awareness and learning in dance that is more primitive than more disembodied forms of knowing. The body and its movement are themselves sources of personal knowledge about the world. The body's movement

in dance and its entrance into distinctive forms of bodily knowledge are facilitated by the body's experience of passion. However, a third feature helps to develop passion and then in turn is expressed by passion, and that is rhythm.

Dance, thirdly, is rhythmic. The movement of dance that creates form or pattern produces rhythm as the patterns are repeated in time, with the repetition taking on a certain cadence. Quite often we dance to the beat and the beat is the underlying pulse of a rhythm. A rhythm possesses a faster or slower tempo and a greater or lesser intensity. A dance takes on various contours depending on the rhythm that is guiding its movements. All six of our grandchildren in their younger years, like their parents before them, naturally and spontaneously started to dance upon hearing the beat of music. The body is stirred to move and the movement happens in sync with the rhythm of the music or song. Human beings have found dance to be an essential and necessary factor in life. One reason for this is that the rhythm of dance helps the human to live in harmony with the rhythm of life.

Passion, then, is the fourth feature of dance. Dance is passionate. Passion has a passive quality about it, for it results from being acted upon. We might identify this being-acted-upon aspect as affect. An affect is an effect or sensation that is had or produced upon the person feeling passion. Besides the more passive, objective quality of affect or sensation, passion also includes a more active, subjective side whose basis we can call emotion. Emotion is more active than affect or sensation because it has the potency to move the passionate one. Emotion can also assume the more intensified form of desire, which is a more potent and permanent form of passion than is affect or sensation, which is less perduring. The movement of dance receives its impulse from bodily passion, through its more passive affective or sensational side working conjointly with its more active emotional or desiring side. Passion is the body's mechanism for generating response to its situation.

The fifth feature of dance is its responsiveness. The dancing and dance of the dancer always take place in a particular space or context that influences in many ways the movements that are transpiring within it. We saw that passion is the means for the body to respond to its situation. The wedding celebration of two young, vibrant professionals is very different from the funeral gathering for a village elder: the response to those two contexts would likely be very different as concerns the type, mood, and nature of the dancing that would go on. Dancing in God would not be a theological motif with potential for making the case for God in a secular world if this feature of responsiveness were not one of the essential features of dance. Dance as responsive opens the door for accessing the transcendent or the divine as a reality to which dancers might respond. The responsiveness of dance does not mean that dance will always be characterized by a high quality of response. I will suggest that dance is most appropriately responsive when it is resonant with its environment, including being resonant with others and God. When that happens, then we have dancing in God taking place. Hartmut Rosa and Søren Kierkegaard will teach us some things on this feature. We will see that responsiveness is a key ingredient in the notion of resonance, and that for our consideration of dance resonance can be understood as the highest level of responsiveness: dancing in God is resonant dancing.

When we speak of dancing in God, then, we are thinking of dance as movement that is bodily, rhythmic, passionate, and responsive. Dance is responsive, passionate, rhythmic, bodily movement. After considerations of Rosa and Kierkegaard, we will conclude the essay in a brief last dance for pulling together thoughts on dancing in God.

## 2. Rosa's Theory of Resonance

If an exposition is a comprehensive explanation of a theory or idea, then this section of the essay offers an exposition of Helmut Rosa's theory of resonance. My task is to articulate his sociological viewpoint that centers on his notion of resonance. To do that, I will attempt to delineate what I regard as four prominent themes in what he calls "A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World". They are his understanding of the context of modernity, his contrast between resonance and alienation, his view of three axes of resonance, and his assessment of his place within the tradition of critical theory. This summary of Rosa's

viewpoint will provide a background for considering Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology.

*2.1. Modernity*

Helmut Rosa operates with an intense need to characterize the context of his deliberations with a full and compelling account. For him, nailing down the dynamics of our contemporary cultural configuration is an extremely important part of his research as a social theorist. Temporal structures of society need to be scrutinized and understood. As he states this conviction: "adequate diagnoses of *the times* (*Zeitdiagnose*) should in fact literally be diagnoses of *its time*, i.e., its temporal structures (*Zeit-diagnosen*)"[4]. To gain insight into how we human beings relate to the world, he believes that it is necessary to unpack the societal and cultural features of that world, which for him include temporality and the world of modernity that has characterized societal life of the West over the past few centuries. In his view, modernity has shifted from its classical form to a late modern form over the past 30 years[5]. In his book *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, Rosa identifies acceleration as a fundamental principle of the modern world. Social acceleration includes technical and technological change, change in the pace or tempo of life, and in the societal and cultural rate of change. The great significance of the arrival of late modernity is that it marks that point at which "acceleration crosses a critical threshold" on the other side of which society loses its control of the situation and social integration becomes very problematic (SA 20). With no signs of this acceleration decreasing, dysfunction at the individual and societal levels has set in; the three major contemporary crises—of the environment, of democracy, and of psychological burnout—manifest this dysfunction (R 2).

Rosa further identifies a societal and a related cultural characteristic of modernity (R 308). Socially, the modern world is only capable of a dynamic stabilization. That is to say, it cannot stabilize itself by putting a stop to its change and its acceleration; stabilization can only come as the change and acceleration are allowed to proceed apace according to the forces that are at play. The only way for society's fundamental institutions to be supported and sustained is for them to continue in their escalatory mode, which means "that they are systemically reliant on economic growth, technological and cultural acceleration, political activation, and, relatedly, constant innovation in order to stabilize their status quo and maintain their structure" (R 308). Modern society, therefore, cannot maintain itself apart from this incessant growth and dynamic movement. Correlatively, modernity's cultural agenda is geared toward strategically expanding the possession of the world by both cultures and individuals (R 308). A person or cultural form in sync with modernity must strive to keep up with the time in order to reap the benefits of being at the cutting edge. This means that competition to gain one's piece of the pie becomes intense, as participants in society and culture are in continual need of repositioning themselves so as to be competitive in a changing world (R 309). As Rosa puts it, "*we must run ever faster in order to maintain our place in the world*" (R 415).

Rosa's diagnosis of modernity is that its relations of resonance are dysfunctional, so modernity is out of tune (R 444). Modernity in Rosa's view only attains stability through escalatory movement (R 405). The escalatory logic of the modern world has its consequences, some positive and many negative. Rosa does not think deceleration is a real option: because of the way things have developed, escalation is a permanent part of our world, and "modern capitalist society", therefore, "must always be dynamically accelerating" (R 1). It is an uphill battle, because in late modernity the big three factors of "growth, acceleration, and increasing innovation" have themselves become institutions, forcibly fueling the competitive accumulation of resources by individuals and shifting society's pattern of temporal structure to a "privileging of the fast and the short term" (R 376). He does think, though, that there are ways for us to live with this situation in a healthier manner. Especially important, he believes, is learning to live in greater resonance.

### *2.2. Resonance and Alienation*

Early on in his book on resonance, Rosa claims that the basic categories of resonance and alienation are "the two fundamental forms of our relationship to the world"; this means that analytically they can function as "regulative ideas" and that his Chapter V on these terms constitutes the central chapter of the book (R 38). In that chapter he claims that "the concept of resonance is a highly suitable metaphor for describing the qualities of relationships, and that it moreover offers enormous potential for analyzing how human beings relate to the world in nearly every area of life" (R 164). He clarifies that resonance is "an acoustic phenomenon", meaning to "re-sound"; it is a state created by sound, as something is made to vibrate or resound (R 165, 153). Rosa lifts up the brain's mirror neurons as considered in the scientific disciplines of "neurobiology, cognitive science, evolutionary biology, developmental psychology, and sociology" to explain how "*resonant* or *responsive relationships* develop between world (or environment), body, and brain, on the one hand, and between brain and mind, on the other, which relationships first make possible not only human thought and cognition but also learning, communication, and action" (R 145). Resonance in a real way, then, is situated at the very foundation of human experience. However, Rosa avoids reductionism (or the view that mirror neuronal resonant incidents necessarily shape the social world) by noting that he understands mirror neurons to "constitute a possible neural basis for resonant phenomena that can be observed in—but" do "not *produce* or *determine*—the social world (R 150)". The intent of his book is to strive "to develop a social-scientific category from the physical phenomenon of resonance" (R 267).

Resonance becomes for Rosa a concept for determining the quality of relationships (R 164). Tuning forks can assist us in understanding resonance. If a vibrating tuning fork is brought into the vicinity of a non-vibrating tuning fork, the second fork will begin to vibrate with the same oscillating pattern as the first (R 124). They are then in resonance. It takes two to have a resonant relation and both participants in the relationship have to be vibrating in concert at the same frequency, mutually reinforcing one another, for resonance to occur (R 229, 165). Rosa speaks of this bi-directional oscillation or double movement as a "vibrating wire" running between subject and world, with affects produced in the form of sensations and feelings seemingly flowing through the subject along with emotions that are expressed in actions (R 163). There is responsive resonance and synchronous resonance: responsive resonance is when two bodies react or respond to the oscillating impulses of one another; synchronous resonance is when, after a period of time, these responding bodies are vibrating in sync with one another (R 166). As applied to the human's relationship to the world, resonance is a relational concept describing "a mode of *being-in-the-world*" or of "*being-related-to-the-world*", in which both the subject and the world relationally influence the forming of one another, with each responding to the other, operating in a vibratory medium or resonant space, each speaking with its own voice, mutually affecting one another (R 166–67, 169)[6].

Resonance as a mode of relation is accorded both descriptive and normative status. Descriptively, Rosa understands resonance "as a basic human capacity and need" from which follow two descriptive conclusions: (1) "human subjectivity and human intersubjectivity develop via the establishment of fundamental resonant relationships", and (2) "human beings are existentially shaped by their longing for resonant relationships", so that "human desire can thus be interpreted simply as desire for resonance" (R 171). Humans need resonance and desire it no less than they do nourishment or recognition. Normatively, "resonant relationships are possible only in mutually accommodating *resonant spaces*"; therefore, resonance can serve as a normative criterion by which one can "examine the resonance-facilitating and resonance-inhibiting aspects of the institutions, practices, and modes of specialization constitutive of (late) modern society" (R 171). Resonance, for Rosa, provides "a normative criterion for examining the quality of social relationships and of life", "can become a standard for social critique", and offers "a standard for successful life", measuring "quality of life . . . directly, by the quality of our relationship to the world" (R 450–51)[7]. Experiencing resonant relationships seems to be the gold standard for living

the good life. Furthermore, an encounter of resonant relationship is primitive, "a kind of *energetically charged* form of contact", which as encounter is a more primal or first-order experience than is the more second-order or derivative quality of a meaningful interpretation (R 137–38). Interestingly, for Rosa, there are few stronger resonance-producing impacts than that of music, which with "just a few sounds and notes" is capable of evoking "enormous emotional effects" and "eliciting the movements of a dance" (R 156). Storytelling has a similar impact: "The philosophical notion that human beings are *storytelling creatures* here finds its root in a logic of resonance and theory of mirroring (R 157)".

Given the current late modern context, Rosa is convinced "that a world unremittingly accelerated by the escalatory logic of modernity" impedes the development of resonant relationships and nurtures the emergence of alienated or mute relationships (R 28). We learn more about resonance as we turn to a consideration of its other, its contrast term, alienation (R 182).

Alienation is a term requiring another term by means of which there can be something over against which the alienation stands. In this case that something, or alienation's antithesis, is resonance. Rosa suggests, in stating the central thesis of his book, that if "we conceive of alienation as a specific mode of relating to the world, then we can initially define it . . . as a *relation of relationlessness*" or a relationship that is meaningless or no longer speaks to us, thus confronting us as mute if not even threatening; this stands over against its opposite, namely, a relation of relatedness, and resonance is precisely "such a responsive, relevant relationship" (R 178). Alienation, then, is defined as "as a mode of relating to the world in which the subject encounters the subjective, objective, and/or social world as either *indifferent* or *repulsive*", "as external, unconnected, non-responsive, in a word mute" (R 178–79). Genuine connecting or touching or relating becomes the antidote to alienation: alienation can be overcome when "subjects are touched or affected by an Other or by others, and, moreover, are themselves capable of touching or affecting others", so that one's relating to the world becomes at least potentially fluid as the rigidly inaudible and inexpressive voices of subject and world are softened and their speaking capacities are restored (R 179). Alienation, pertaining more to subjects, leads to reification, pertaining more to objects. If my world is mute and repulsive, then the various realities of that world are experienced as being merely things, as resources, instruments, means to serve my designs with no acknowledgement of their inherent worth. No vibrating wire of positive affect and emotion functions in relation to those "things"; reification flattens relationships so that no healthy mutual recognition of subject and world is able to transpire (R 179, 353).

The race to get ahead and keep ahead that the modern world delivers to and demands of us because of its escalatory acceleration, its charge for us to fight for our share, and its fiercely competitive milieu, lead many into a state of depression or burnout, in which they "experience the world as flat, mute, cold, and hollow, no longer capable of affecting them", and this "represents a radical form of alienation" symptomatic "of a comprehensive loss of resonance" (R 179–80). Rosa holds, according to available statistics, that "psychological *burnout*, the total depletion of mental resources leading to depression and other stress-related disorders . . . must now be considered the fastest-growing disease in the world" (R 105).

With all this negativity regarding alienation, one might think the task must surely be to end all alienation in favor of resonance. However, Rosa is operating with a highly dialectical relation between these two; sometimes they stand opposed to one another but at other times they function correlatively (R 189). As in the case of Hegel's dialectical relation of the finite and the infinite, where the infinite necessarily depends on the finite as that which the infinite is not, so too with Rosa's dialectical relation of resonance and alienation. Resonance emerges out of and presupposes the existence of the alien, "that which is non-assimilable, foreign, and even mute": "Encountering the foreign commences a dialogic process of . . . adaptive transformation that constitutes resonant experience" (R 185). Hoping for a completely resonant world is utterly unrealistic, since resonance only happens as a momentary flash of connectivity within a mute world, and even in such moments of

intense resonant experiences, the longing for resonance is never fully satisfied. Intervening moments of foreignness and inaccessibility remain close at hand. Central to Rosa's project is articulating a clear relationship among alienation, resonance, and, critically important, adaptive transformation, for the third of these terms funds the capacity for change (R 31). Resonance and its resulting transformation make possible mutual change on the part of both of the very different realities of self and world (R 182). The person who has come to know and appreciate the experience of resonance can develop a "dispositional resonance" that equips her for encountering alienation "with openness and a willingness to allow oneself to be transformed"; as adaptive transformation is then enabled to take place, the world begins to resound with meaning and sometimes even music and merriment (R 190).

Above, we identified the desire or longing for resonance as one of its descriptive features. Desire, along with its counterpart, fear, as Rosa understands them, are "fundamental driving forces and existential modes of being", for these two directed forces of "fear of" and "desire for" emerge out of our respective memories of feeling lost and abandoned in a cold or hostile world as if in a desert and feeling happy and fulfilled in a harmonious or hospitable world as if in an oasis (R 114–15). These respective existential memories determine furthermore our existential expectations: "Our *horizon of expectation* . . . is defined both by the fear of stumbling into situations of alienation and by the longing or hope of being able to find our way back to those 'oases of sustenance'" (R 115). Desire and fear together with memories and expectations guide us to search for resonance and avoid alienation. Though elementary forms of our relationship to the world, desire and fear are uncanny, deep structures eluding precise conceptualization, for they begin as "emotional states rooted in the phenomenal body" but then change in overlapping "with the subject's cognitive convictions and evaluative attitudes, which themselves are the outcome of cultural worldviews and social practices" (R 119–20). In short, "our relation to the world is always marked by the interplay between attractive and repulsive energies and complex processes of self-interpretation, which mutually form and permeate each other, converging in our perception of concrete situations" (R 121). For Rosa, though, desire and fear are critically important forces in our time, which time according to Eric Fromm needs to expand "Nietzsche's diagnosis of the resonancelessness of the world or the cosmos resulting from the death of God to include the muting of human beings: 'In the nineteenth century the problem was that *God is dead*; in the twentieth century the problem is that *man is dead*'" (R 338). In our time, the wire connecting self and world is capped on both ends, preventing vibrancy, and this constitutes "the catastrophe of resonance" (R 338).

Essential in Rosa's view for heightening the desire for resonance and lowering the fear of alienation is the appropriate functioning of what he calls the axes of resonance.

### *2.3. The Axes of Resonance*

Rosa states that a good life "is one that is rich in resonant experiences and has at its disposal stable axes of resonance" (R 451), and that successful lives are characterized by good working axes of resonance (R 10). What are these axes? There is a conceptual difference "between brief, often intense moments of resonant *experience* and *lasting resonant relationships*, which are necessary to provide a stable and reliable basis for such repeatable experiences", and these latter are "axes of resonance" (R 39). Part Two of his *Resonance* treats three such axes that he refers to as horizontal, diagonal, and vertical: the horizontal axis centers on resonant relationships to other human beings which we encounter in romantic relationships and friendships as well as in modern politics; the diagonal axis concerns resonant relationships with the material world of things, especially in the world of work and education; and the vertical axis concentrates on resonant relationships to life as a whole, existence, or the world, where the counterpart of the subject is perceived and experienced as a totality transcending the individual (R 39–40). The three axes of resonance have, then, respective spheres of resonance within them. Our social theorist is surely aware that the drawing of such boundaries is somewhat artificial since resonant experiences are not neatly confined but overlap among axes and spheres; and yet, these notions are nonetheless

helpful for analytical purposes (R 200). Furthermore, he notes a connection between these axes and ritual. In fact, he identifies as the elementary function of ritual practices to create varied sorts of resonant spaces and axes: "Rituals establish sociocultural axes of resonance along which may be experienced three different kinds of resonant relationship: *vertical* (e.g., to the gods, the cosmos, time, or eternity), *horizontal* (within one's social community), and *diagonal* (with respect to *things*)" (R 173). As examples of such rituals he mentions the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist, which charges things like bread, wine, and cross with resonance; the thrilling beginning of a World Cup match when teams take the field; and the magical moment when the first chords of a rock concert ring out. He would likely agree that dance is another ritual that can sponsor the enrichment of all three of these axes of resonance.

The horizontal axis of resonance produces resonant relationships intimately connected with the processes of recognition, which Rosa regards as "the form of resonance in our social relations" (R 195). Yet, he wants to distinguish resonance from recognition insofar as one can struggle for recognition but not for resonance, since resonance is not "apportioned on a competitive basis" (R 196). The focus of recognition is on the subject being acknowledged ("*I am recognized*"); the focus of resonance is on the subjects engaged in the resonant relationship ("resonance is something that can only happen *between us*")[8]. Both recognition and resonance take place within the key horizontal sphere of the family. Within modern societies where individuals face the perpetual struggle of competition in their public lives, the family is a sphere in which individuals can find nurturing love and support and emotional sustenance and comfort as in an inner harbor of resonance amidst this outer stormy societal sea (R 202–04). Counteracting the alienation-producing societal setting, familial "relationships between lovers and those between parents and children form the central and oftentimes only resonant axes of our relationship to the world, charged with guaranteeing that the world as a whole be able to respond to us, to 'sing' for us" (R 208). Deprivation and/or deviance appear where this experience is lacking (R 204).

Friendship is a second sphere that contributes to resonance's horizontal axis. Resonance has played a role in the longstanding thought of friendship being based on an agreement of sorts between two 'souls', and Rosa claims that "*two people are friends when a resonant wire of sympathy and trust vibrates between them*" (R 210). Friendship differs from family in a threefold way: it is not a legal or political institution, it takes place outside of the routine practices of everyday life, and it includes a limit to physical resonance (R 210–11). Human affection receives expression between friends and so does forgiveness. Forgiveness, indispensable to friendship, is needed when serious alienation is precipitated between friends: "forgiveness is the two-sided process whereby a hardened relationship again becomes fluid; it is the process that allows two or more subjects to *encounter* each other again, thus re-establishing their capacity for resonance" such that both sides "stop calculating and judging" (R 214).

The inclusion of politics as a third sphere within the horizontal axes of resonance is an interesting choice by Rosa. In our time, marked as it is with extremely antagonistic partisan conflict or even warfare, one does not quickly think of politics as a good prospective arena for nurturing resonance. But Rosa believes this negative assessment of the potential for politics to serve resonance is because of the precipitous and "problematic decline of the democratic order": "The great promise of democracy . . . is simply that the structures and institutions of public life can be *transformed and adapted* in and through the medium of democratic politics, and that their ruling representatives can be made responsive to their subjects" (R 216). Modern democracy, based as it is on the idea that every individual be given a voice and that that voice be allowed to be heard, ought to lead to a politically shaped world that is an expression of a productive polyphony (R 217)[9]. Contemporary democracy needs, therefore, to be a musical democracy that sings out with the will of the majority through the different forms of voice: the vote, the embodied deliberative rational argument, and the various forms of musical expression such as "national anthems, workers' songs, protest music, and the various aesthetic expressions of subcultures", including even

the powerful creative explosion resulting from the 1968 "*musicalization* of politics and the *politicization* of music" that took place with the music of the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Pink Floyd, the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, and Bob Dylan (218–22). Of course, our situation now calls for nothing less than a new revolution to occur, since the thought of "the convergence of political and musical resonance . . . possesses little persuasive power today" in our late modern time in which apparently "the resonant wire between citizens and politics has been severed" (R 222). Music, and we could add dance as well, brings an earthy experience to people that helps to sponsor resonance, and we can only hope that a new revolution within the arts might break out and bring with it a transformation of our bleak political scene. It is difficult for disgust and hatred to continue to exist among those who sing and dance together.

The diagonal axis of resonance in which the world of things speaks to us was readily acknowledged by those in pre-modern cultures and is so by many young children today, but the late modern Western adult is not so readily convinced, because the prevailing rational, cognitive, scientific view of the universe is that it is mute and only humans possess voices that speak (R 226). Plenty of voices, though, insist that such an absolute bifurcation between the naturally mute world and the humanly voiced world is a false divide that may be contributing significantly to our current ecological crisis (R 227). Is it possible in our time to hear "the singing of things"? Rosa thinks it is, and he desires for us to understand our relationship to things not merely in a poetic or metaphorical manner "*apart from the real world*" but rather as "modes of relation, i.e., as ways of relating to the world through things that are also possible in everyday life" (R 230). For him, "things obtain their resonant quality from being embedded in the totality of life and the world that confronts the experiencing and acting subject" (R 232). This happens in various spheres in which, through adaptively transforming things, we make materialities speak, thus facilitating resonant relationships (R 233); but our resonance guru concentrates on three arenas, the first being the world of work.

Work, or labor, involves human beings dealing with materialities, be they "kneading dough in a bakery, sawing boards in a carpentry shop, treating the soil in a nursery, writing on a paper at a writing workshop, or interpreting an experiment in a chemistry lab", and such work or grappling with material "always generates its own *resonance with things*" (R 234). Acquiring work skills in handling material creates special feelings reflecting the relationship formed among material, implement, and the human, together with the established responsiveness of the material, the effectiveness of the implement, and the competence of the human. These feelings are feelings of resonance that have emerged from a living relationship that involves a dynamic symbiosis between humans and things, and such resonant relationships give sustaining power to the workers involved.

Schools of education constitute a second diagonal sphere of resonant space. In schools, the initial formation and socialization from the family is advanced as new modes of reflecting on world content are introduced in order to actively distance ourselves from that content and to learn about adaptively transforming it (R 238). It is during this time that adolescents learn to articulate their strong evaluations for becoming decision-makers in the world and develop a personality that involves "grappling with the world's provinces of meaning and material" (R 238–39). According to Rosa's resonance theory, education should aim "not at cultivating either the world or the self, but rather at *cultivating relationships to the world*"; the goal is "not refinement of the individualistic or atomistic self, nor disengaged mastery of the world, but rather opening up and establishing axes of resonance", for "*[c]hildren are not vessels to be filled, but torches to be lit*" (R 241).

Third, Rosa considers sport and consumption as spheres in which individuals hear the voice of their own bodies and experience a sense of their true selves (R 249). In most all sports, "the relevant agility and motor skills necessarily presuppose" and foster "a resonant relationship between *mind* and *body*, *thought* and *movement*", and team sports often call for individual actions to "blend together in a kind of choreography" (R 249–50). We have come to know well the collective euphoria that often occurs at major sporting events when

spectators respond to the game and to one another: that raucous communal experience in sports resembles the experience sociologist and anthropologist Émile Durkheim refers to as "the 'collective effervescence' of primitive cultures", experienced when tribes come together for their grand festive communal celebratory rituals that are filled with the electricity of communal rapture or ecstasy (R 251, 197). Sports are capable of transforming a huge number of participating spectators into a type of temporary system of resonance for a large mass of people (R 252). In the case of consumption or shopping, our final diagonal sphere, people can have a resonant relationship with a commodity because such a thing holds a promise of resonance; however, the promise becomes a reality only if the purchaser follows through and uses the commodity in his or her life and receives the benefit of relating to it in a resonant fashion (R 254–55). Too often this is not what happens after a purchase; too frequently the purchaser, after having been moved by advertising to long for and buy that fancy workout outfit, ends up hanging it in the closet, closing off any chance for the purchaser to gain a resonant feeling of self-efficacy and the resulting experience of adaptive transformation in relation to it (R 255). The purchased commodity then receives no opportunity to gain a voice of its own (R 256).

Rosa's account of the vertical axis of resonance is very rich, and my summary of this axis of resonance will be a bit more expansive because of its relevance to our topic of the relation of God and the world. The responsive relationships that constitute the vertical dimension of resonance focus on the totality of existence, life, and the cosmos that is the subject's counterpart, and in these "experiences of vertical resonance, *the world itself* in a way obtains its own voice" (R 40). Spheres considered within the vertical axes of resonance are religion, nature, art, and history. In discussing "The Promise of Religion", Rosa understands religion "as the idea, expressed through rites and practices, songs and stories, art and architecture, that this *something* [that is and that is present] is responsive, accommodating, and understanding" (R 258). We then are given three important, quite stunning, claims. We read, first, that "*God* is at bottom the notion of a responsive world"; second, that "God radiates worldliness"; and third, that "religion", meaning "to bind", "is in fact a relationship, one which promises the categories of love and meaning as a guarantee that the basic, primal form of existence is a relationship not of alienation but of resonance" (R 258). I construe (though some will claim that here I am looking through a prejudicial interpretive lens, which charge might hold some validity) these three affirmations as Rosa gesturing respectively toward three views: in the first claim I detect an endorsing of pantheism's view of the identity of God and the world; in the second claim I discern an endorsing of panentheism's view that the world resides in the God who is radiating its worldliness; and in the third claim I ascertain an endorsing of pantransentheism's view that the world resides in the God who is transforming it so that relationships of resonance prevail over those of alienation. These are rather strong, provocative, intriguing statements that our author sets forth, although they are tempered by the appearance throughout his text of much more qualified claims about God and religion.

Rosa brings into his treatment of religion ideas from William James, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Martin Buber, and Paul Gerhardt as affirmers of the resonance of the universe, and especially Albert Camus and Friedrich Nietzsche as advocates of its "icy silence of bleak space" (R 259–68). Rosa underscores how Buber and Gerhardt notably "recognize as the essence of religion *the existential need for response* along with the promise of this need's potential *fulfillment*"; furthermore, he points out that Christian theology "adds to this the idea of God as a kind of *being of relation*, as expressed particularly in the doctrine of *perichoresis*—the relationship of the three persons of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), which fully interpenetrate each other yet remain distinct—as well as in the early Christian notion that God and the human are constitutively connected", which *perichoretic* and constitutively connected type of relationship Peter Sloterdijk explicitly defines as "'fundamental', 'radical', resonance" (R 264 and [8], 545f). If the author is not embracing all of these thoughts, he is at a minimum seeing them as being in sufficient congruity with his resonance theory to count as supporting evidence for his viewpoint. After considering thoughts of Martin

Luther on sin (which Rosa interprets as "a state of resonancelessness, or rather *resistance to resonance*"), Rosa writes that "for Luther as for the monotheistic world religions as a whole, it is not a matter of actually hearing this other voice [i.e., the voice of the Other or others that encircle oneself], but of being open to resonance, of *desiring it*": "Religion is then a promise that the world or the universe or God still speaks (or *sings*) to us *even when we are incapable of hearing it, when all our axes of resonance have fallen mute*" (R 265). Acknowledged is the reality that religion, while containing truth in its promise of expressing an existential desire for resonance, no longer maintains wide currency with the fulfillment it offers "to the existential need for answers in the face of a *silent universe*" within the accelerating secular culture of late modernity (R 266). However, Rosa exclaims, "modernity has found and institutionalized other ways of fulfilling this desire that are functionally equivalent to religion without requiring a metaphysical system of belief" (R 268). These are the spheres of nature, art, and history, which we will briefly summarize to conclude our discussion of axes of resonance.

"The voice of nature" is a topic that makes its appearance in classical Greek philosophical thought about "the music of the spheres", in Johannes Kepler's work on "the harmony of the world" in which he tried to demonstrate the resonance-based correspondence between the laws of astronomy and the laws of music, and in the more recent effort of cosmic physicist Brian Greene's string theory to reconcile particle physics and astrophysics by comparing the universe's cosmic strings to those of a musical instrument (R 268–69). Contributions from the various disciplines and cultural developments have come together over the centuries to give credence to the "singular collective noun—Nature—that confronts us in such a way that we can hear 'its' voice: thus, "*the voice of nature* is a modern invention" (R 269–70). Many now hold that we must go into nature to find ourselves, "to comprehend our inner nature *through* outer nature", as the imperatives "*Listen within yourself!*" and "*Listen to nature!*" come to blend together into a single approach for getting one's life in order (R 270–71). As a result, nature has become the chief locus of resonance for many within later modern culture. But Rosa points out the paradox that despite the many who have become environmentally conscious, there are few who have become genuinely environmentally active: "Environmental *awareness*, the ever-growing concern about the destruction of the environment, is an expression of our desired resonant relationship to nature and our anxiety about losing it. Our *behavior* with respect to the environment, however, reveals a mute relationship to the world" (R 273, 277).

Another cultural sphere that "has functionally taken the place of religion in modern society" for numerous people is art, which—despite being unable, like religion, to "provide a cohesive cognitive horizon of meaning or blueprint of the world" that speaks more pertinently to "our need to *make sense of life*"—does pertain significantly "to our *desire for resonance*", especially insofar as in modernity it has come gradually "to penetrate all aspects of everyday life" (R 280). "The Power of Art" today is usually understood as a play of mysterious, inaccessible forces at work to inspire the art piece emerging from somewhere deep within the unconsciousness of the artist functioning in concert with the creative energy brought by the conscious labors of the artist (R 281–83). A similar mystery attends the experience of the person encountering the work of art. Often times resonance (and alienation) are experienced in relation to art within all three axes of resonance, because art allows "the possibility of resonant relationships to shine forth in the midst of alienated conditions" (R 286, 292). Many people today "paint and make pottery, play music and write poetry, and especially dance and sing in order to feel sensory, bodily, cognitive, and social resonances, to be able to hear their pre-subject voice and so enter into dialogue with an inaccessible Other—even if it is *their own Other*" (R 294). Over-scrutinizing art can drain it of its power, but that danger has been lessened within late modernity by the postmodern watchword of "anything goes", according to which "all possible modes of expression are equally valid" (R 296).

History, our fourth and final sphere of the axis of vertical resonance, is the arena in which we learn about the temporal dimension of resonance. Rosa here summarizes that

both nature and art refer to an encountered force that remains inaccessible, speaking with its own voice, and that leads to experiences of self-transcendence, experiences of that which exceeds or goes beyond the subject (R 296–97). However, Rosa insists that this sort of "experience need not be religious in nature, i.e., it presupposes neither belief in nor even the existence of a transcendent or metaphysical power"; what it does ultimately concern itself with, however, are "relationships to the *world*, not otherworldly transcendence, although what is at stake here is our relationship to the totality of what confronts us—what encompasses us—as subjects" (R 297). Rosa seems in this setting to give no gestures toward any "pan" form of religion, convinced as he is that religion necessarily affirms otherworldly transcendence. I respond that some of us within religion want to affirm a worldly transcendence, which I believe he is doing. As for history, he thinks we experience it as moving in time, and that it actually appears as a movement whose voice or call is to be heard even as its unfolding deliverances ultimately remain inaccessible (R 297). History as a whole comes to be experienced as a formative power whose intensity is sensed when, visiting a particular historic site, past and future come alive in relation to this present resonant space that enthralls me as I reflect on its importance for history (R 298–99). Resonant historical reflection involves entertaining past, present, and future as co-determinants in an immediate sensory experience; this can happen as well via meaning manifested through narrative resonances (R 300). Resonant moments of experiencing time include this co-presence of past, present, and future, as one's experience of the world includes the ceaseless flow of future into present and present into past; and the severance of the connectedness of these temporal modes often leads to alienation and depression (R 302).

Encountered in this treatment by Rosa on vertical axes of resonance have been ambiguous claims about the relation of God and world. He can state that the accelerating pace of our society, culture, and lives is bringing increased burnout and depression and "the collapse of axes of resonance that are constitutive of subjects themselves"; on the other hand, he says that where danger lurks, there resonant, saving powers that can overcome our crises will grow as well (R 42–3). He claims that in a certain sense, resonant moments offer a promise of salvation; on the other hand, he writes that "resonance theory should thus by no means be misunderstood as a doctrine of salvation" (R 185, 451). He contends that "creative transformation can only succeed on the basis of a fundamental faith in resonance", for "subjects are capable of establishing resonant relationships to the world only when they expect to be able to adaptively transform it", "to be able to construct a resonant wire", "when they are willing and able to remain open to resonant experiences and also possess the energy and self-efficacy beliefs needed for them" (R 189–90); on the other hand, he accurately portrays people of religious faith in numerous faith traditions as frequently resorting to violence to dominate and control others in forcing them to dance in line with their experience of resonance rather than reaching out to them and touching them in a hospitable manner (R 267–68). He has seemed to endorse our three forms of "pan" theism by apparently affirming a transcendent quality to the Other and others operating in and through the world, but then he is quick to dismiss religion as otherworldly. He wants to affirm religion's longing and desire, and yet he does not want to affirm at least some of religion's beliefs and metaphysical claims. Of course, it could be that he is affirming an innerworldly theism but dismisses it as being religion because it does not resonate with his otherworldly understanding of what religion is. Here should be mentioned my gratitude to one of the blind reviewers of this essay who has indicated that Rosa has a book on "Religion Needs Religion" being published on July 20, 2024 by Polity in Cambridge UK. Of course, religion is a fiercely ambiguous reality and always will be, so an ambivalent attitude towards it is to be expected. However, my interpretation of Rosa's somewhat mystifying degree of ambivalence on religion in the *Resonance* book might hopefully have to be adjusted after reading this new book.

*2.4. Critical Theory*

Rosa's teaching and writings have contributed greatly to the broader tradition of critical social theory to which he belongs (SA xvii). His wonderful account of that critical tradition includes discussions of Karl Marx, Georg Lukács, Max Weber, Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, Émile Durkheim, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, and Axel Honneth, among others (R 320–56). At the conclusion of this trenchant tour through these major critical theorists and their views on modernity, Rosa criticizes these critical views. His main criticism is that, generally, the critique by these men is too negative insofar as it presents a catastrophe of resonance that is one-sided and simplistic; this negativity has been qualified only recently, in part because of new voices of female thinkers, such as Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib, Eva Illouz, and Rachel Jaeggi, who tend to see human beings possessing a greater sensitivity to and capacity for resonance (R 355). The author pronounces that his "book thus represents an effort to move beyond Critical Theory with a *positive* concept that will allow it to move beyond critique and embark on the search for a better form of being" (R 444); the sociology of human relationships to the world that he offers "represents a critique of historically realized *relations of resonance*" that he hopes is "also a modified and renewed form of Critical Theory" (R 16). And Rosa himself does include in his book the narration of a counterhistory to that of Critical Theory, which he titles "Modernity as Increasing Sensitivity to Resonance" (R 357–366). There, over against the fundamental *anxiety* of modern society that consists in the fear of a relationless, hostile world, he presents a matching fundamental *promise*, the great hope of a singing world, so that modernity's project, though defined as it is "by the strategy of increasing humanity's share of the world", can be seen as actually being "motivated by the hope of adaptively transforming the world", with the promise of this transformational capacity being grounded in the modern idea of freedom, which allows us to feel at "home" in a myriad of ways in a myriad of resonating and alienating relationships (R 357). Rosa clearly wants to maintain a sense for the possibility of a different way of relating to the world. This way, he avers, must build on a critique of axes of resonance in which the *quality* of our relationships to the world serves as "the measuring stick for political and individual action", and in which not economic escalation but the maintenance of axes of resonance serves as the measure of quality, with "*alienation* (on the side of *subjects*) and *reification* (on the side of *objects)*" functioning as indicators of needed critique (R 436). A critical theory of resonance, therefore, which surely constitutes a "moral capitalism" that so many are calling for today, is what is required for societies and their citizens to flourish in our late modern world. Actualizing such a theory, I suggest, would contribute substantially to the world's dancing in God, whether or not Rosa wants to affirm the reality of God.

Before closing this long discussion on Rosa's theory of resonance, I need to address the matter of the elephant that has been in the room during this entire discussion. The elephant is the figure of G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel is present in the previous paragraph's reference to the modern idea of freedom that allows us to feel at home. Hegel stands at the beginning of the history of Critical Theory as a primary thinker providing inspiration to that line of thinkers from Marx to Honneth. Hegel is referred to in establishing the difference between the other as offering us merely an *echo* of ourselves versus offering us a genuine *response* in a relation of love; "being in love is a mutual (adaptive) transformation (or even 'sublation' in Hegel's sense)": "The two lovers both function not only as 'second tuning forks,' each set off by the other, but also as 'first tuning forks', each causing the other to resound" (R 153). Hegel appears in Rosa's discussion of the family, with love between two intimate partners constituting for Hegel "the quintessential resonant relationship inasmuch as it represents an archetype of the idea of *being with oneself in another*" (R 205). Hegel is mentioned as well in the discussion of recognition within civil society: "It is only through the process of modernization that claims to recognition in the three dimensions of love, law, and social esteem have been differentiated and legally institutionalized as the spheres of family, the state, and the market, as Hegel first conceived of them and as they have evolved today into the institutions of personal relationships, democratic decision-making, and economic

activity" (R 353). Hegel is given some words also in Rosa's brief treatment of literature and philosophy. Rosa acknowledges that in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, "the relation between spirit and nature, subject and world, individual and society can still be understood as a relation of resonance only because Hegel introduces a mysterious 'world-spirit' that permeates both sides, connecting them with each other outside of causal or instrumental interrelations" (R 316). He continues: "At the same time, Hegel here follows a triadic and dynamic model of history, . . . according to which the path of history proceeds from an original unity", "through a historically necessary phase of division, separation, and alienation, leading to a higher stage of reconciliation" (R 316). Rosa emphasizes: "What is specific to Hegel's model is that here subject and world mutually affect and interpenetrate each other *without merging or blending into each other*" (R 316). Then our resonance guru adds a very telling little admission: "This idea is without question centrally important to resonance theory" (R 316). The elephant in the room here receives a rather replete acknowledgement[10].

## 3. Kierkegaard's Critical Philosophical Theology

There is every reason to think that Hartmut Rosa regarded Søren Kierkegaard as being an ally of sorts. Beyond reasons that will make this clear as our deliberations unfold, he states that a writing by Georg Simmel (1958–1918), a leading contributor to early 20th-century social theory, "reads like a sociological explanation of the loss of resonance lamented by the likes of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche" (R 331, and the quote is referring to [11], 177f).

And on the other end of the vibrating wire I sense and think that Kierkegaard, too, would have appreciated and resonated with Rosa's resonance theory. They both are concerned with the quality of relationships and affirm and negate similar kinds of things. Of course, Kierkegaard does not make great use of the term "resonance" itself. In fact, in the *Cumulative Index* of *Kierkegaard's Writings* is listed only one reference to the word "resonance" [12] (p. 281). It appears in the brief piece on Mrs. Heiberg (1812–1890)—an actress who was the wife of Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860), the leading literary figure of the day—titled *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, under the pseudonym Inter et Inter (with the Latin "Inter" meaning simply "between"). The reference appears in a paragraph continuing the process of "imagin[ing] an actress who is in the possession of all that is required for being unconditionally eminent" (*CD* 304/SKS 10:323):

> Her indefinable possession, in order to come yet a little closer to defining it, further signifies *expressiveness of soul*—that in the mood of immediate passion she is attuned to idea and thought, that her as yet unreflective inwardness is essentially in harmony with ideality, that every touch of a thought or idea strikes a note and gives a sonorous echo, and that she has an original and unique sensitiveness. Thus she relates herself soulfully to the author's words, but she relates hers to herself in the something more that very properly may be called resonance in relation to the lines and countenance in relation to the whole character. She does not merely take the author's words correctly from his mouth, but she gives them back to him in such a way that in the co-sounding of roguishness, in the co-knowledge of ingeniousness, it is as if she were also saying: Can you do the same thing that I do?
>
> (CD 311–312/SKS 10:331.)

One of the characteristics of being an "unconditionally eminent" actress is possessing "expressiveness of soul", and a major feature of this quality lies in relating "soulfully to the author's words", so that the expressing of those words on stage achieves a "resonance" with what the playwright intended.

While we do not have a long list of passages in which Kierkegaard uses the word "resonance" and discusses its inner, hidden, deeper, secret meaning, we can allow this single instance of his using the word to inform what we will be doing here in our treatment of

Kierkegaard. This single instance of using the notion of resonance can serve as an analogy for explaining the purpose of Kierkegaard's life project or authorship as a whole. In this quote on the imagined actress, he speaks of a desired resonance that takes place between the dramatist's written words and the careful action of the actress to embody those words in the most appropriate way so that she gives those written words on the pages of the script the most full-bodied expression in life on the stage. The guiding claim that will be directing the deliberations of the following thoughts on Kierkegaard is that *the notion of resonance stands at the center of Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology*. I think this holds true for the full tenure of his work as an author: the task was for human beings to continually be engaged in appropriating truth, beauty, and goodness in their lives so that their existence might continually be transformed and their lives become more fulfilled. The major element of Kierkegaard's vocational discernment centered on the realization that the goal of his authorship, the amazing linguistic formulations of both his pseudonymous or unsigned and veronymous or signed writings of his life's project, was that these words on the page be given expression in an embodied way on the stage of life, within existence. Just as with the imagined eminent actress who had a deep desire for resonance to take place between written words and the words expressed in life on the stage, so too Kierkegaard had a deep desire for resonance to take place between his thoughts or his ideas, his books or his words, his doctrines or his creeds—and the actualization of those linguistic creations within the existence of human beings. His profound desire for this sort of resonance that leads to authenticity of existence and life we see inscribed in his authorship. I identify this concern for the embodying within existence of an intended goal or purpose *as a concern for bodiliness that above we labeled the second element of dance*.

For such resonance to transpire, "adaptive transformation" is required to reduce alienation and enhance resonance, "axes of resonance" are needed for the appropriate support, and a unique form of "criticism" is called for. This means that our task here becomes a threefold one: to articulate ways that Kierkegaard understands (1) adaptive transformation, (2) resonant axes, and (3) resonance-grounded critique. In each instance, the form of resonance informing the analysis will be that deeply desired type of resonance that occurs as critical philosophico-theological *constructs, convictions, and content* become incarnate in the *comportment, courage, and conduct* of the subjective and objective lives of humans, as the instantiation and actualization of those beliefs give shape to passions, dispositions, and virtues that change behavior through the mysterious, if not magical, transformative realities of the world. The world. Kierkegaard says precious little directly about the world, especially in comparison with what he says about God and the self. But he communicates much to his readers about his view of the world in a little statement he makes in an 1847 undated journal entry discussing Bishop Mynster among others. He writes: "No art is required to depict the world darkly [or as dominated by alienation]; rather, the art is to have one's life express and reproduce exactly what one teaches about the world—to have one's life illustrate this (KJN 4,187, NB2:119/SKS 20:188, NB2:119)".

Kierkegaard's personal life and his writings manifest his artful relationship with the world, which leads him to engage his life on behalf of what Rosa calls desired resonance and Kierkegaard himself calls desired fulfillment in the relationship with God. By way of delineating our investigation of Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology under the guiDANCE of these resonance-related topics, we will learn much about his understanding of the relation between God and the world. In the process of our discussion we will also attempt to glean some further insights into dancing in God, identifying places within the authorship where elements of dance are evident. For as Kierkegaard's deep desire for resonance happens and what I interpret as signs of a possible pantransentheistic position start to become clear, a progression within human transformation can be discerned as moving toward a destination that in its culminative state approximates dancing in God, a most resonant state indeed. We begin with Kierkegaard's critique.

*3.1. Resonance-Grounded Critique*

While the desire for resonance between his thought and being, words and actions, talking and walking, possibility and actuality, message and existence, was present from his student days until his death, the strategy for best bringing this resonance to fruition within his setting of Golden Age Denmark changed over time and reflects an evolving process of self-discovery in settling on the best strategy. The attribute of being a critical thinker seemed to come rather naturally to him, as evidenced by the frustration his tutor Hans L. Martensen experienced with him in 1834. Without becoming a full-fledged Kantian, Kierkegaard did learn much from Kant's critical philosophy, especially from the first critique concerning the limitations of theoretical thinking and the need to clip the wings of reason so as to prevent it from learning more than it was able to grasp through attempted speculative flights beyond experience. The second critique on practical reason also gave support to the view that accorded reason an independent arena in which to address questions about God, freedom, and immortality, and to possess its own approach for resolving antinomies that arise in that context: so over against the search for knowledge about the world within science, there stood a legitimate search for the good, moral life. Kierkegaard also learned much from another post-Kantian Lutheran Königsberger, Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), especially as concerns understanding the importance of language and its acoustical qualities as the basis for epistemology. Kierkegaard gained access to another approach to critical thinking through his immersion into Hegel, and while he appropriated much from this grand thinker, he could not abide by his view of mediation, and thus through Anti-Climacus accuses him of erecting "a huge building, a system, a system embracing the whole of existence, world history, etc.", while as concerns his personal life or existence, "he himself does not personally live in this huge, doomed palace but in a shed alongside it, or in a doghouse, or at best in the janitor's quarters" (SUD 43–44/SKS 11:156). But the Dane's experience of the culture of his day was decisive for intensifying his critique.

Within Kierkegaard's orbit of interest and activity in Copenhagen life, the trio of Heiberg, Mynster, and Martensen stood out as key representatives of the institutional culture, as they were authoritative leaders within the theater, church, and academy, while also greatly influencing the press. The more entanglements Kierkegaard had with these three, "the great coterie" as he called them, the more he came to see, despite their many capacities and significant contributions, that they were also contributing to a leveling of life in which the significant was reduced to what allows itself to be counted, reality was commodified, and the push for homogeneity or sameness eroded individuality. The market town of Copenhagen was undergoing the transition from a mercantile to a capitalist economy with all the ambiguous consequences of that major change. Kierkegaard's discerning eye could see that socio-economic and cultural forces were robbing people of their particularity as the crowd carried the clout and its general viewpoint was becoming the authoritative voice while the views and voices of individual persons were not being heard. This leveling of culture needed to be criticized. On Rosa's terms, the resonance-inhibiting forces of institutions, practices, and modes of specialization of the emerging modern society were strengthening as resonance-facilitating forces were weakening. For Kierkegaard, the major source of leveling's insidious development into a pervasive process and its potent sustainer in the present age was quite obvious. It was the extremely alien, grossly anemic, and radically inauthentic form that Christianity had come to assume, the form which he labeled "Christendom". Christendom was a sick form of religion that was capitulating its genuine identity in fully accommodating itself to the prevailing "leveled" culture. And the land, unfortunately, was full of people who mistakenly presumed that the form of religion they were baptized into was the legitimate, authentic Christian reality. Kierkegaard thought otherwise. His resonance-grounded critique, therefore, needed to offer a corrective and take up the required task of "reintroducing Christianity into Christendom". Especially after the mid-1840s, this became the primary thrust of his criticism, and it necessitated him living his life very much "against the stream".

For the remaining discussion in this section I will rely on thoughts from Rosa, for two reasons: first, because it will helpfully round out the analysis in bringing the overview of Kierkegaard's critique to a close, and second, because Rosa's substantial contribution to our discussion of Kierkegaard's "resonance-grounded critique" will be a further indication of the degree to which the Rosa–Kierkegaard relationship is marked by considerable resonance. The German social theorist offers an interesting perspective on Kierkegaard's critique, noting that "he sees the cause of the utter resonancelessness of the world in which he finds himself not in the nature of things, but in the character of his *age*": he points to *The Sickness unto Death* as a writing in which "Kierkegaard works out the fundamental relationality of human existence and demonstrates that successfully being oneself is possible only in and through one's relationship to an Other"; and in *Two Ages* Kierkegaard "diagnoses widespread apathy, shallowness, dispassion, and relationlessness as symptomatic of a modern 'present age' that has grown reflective, abstract, and distant, in contrast to the warm, vital, active, and energetic 'age of revolution" (R 318). In this Kierkegaardian conception, modernity "appears as a nihilistically flattened world of *deathly stillness* in which nothing stands out; even the individuals living in it feel themselves to be empty and superfluous" (R 318). Rosa in a note refers to Kierkegaard's *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air*, where he "contrasts the deathly stillness of alienation against the eloquent silence of essential—resonant—relatedness: 'From the lily and the bird as teachers, let us learn silence, or learn to keep silent'"[11].

In Rosa's analysis, what he finds Kierkegaard calling for as the needed contrast to the age—in what we are designating his resonance-grounded critique—is more passion rather than more reflection:

> [And] whereas a passionate age *accelerates, raises up and overthrows, elevates and debases*, a reflective age does the opposite, it *stifles and impedes, it levels*. Leveling is a quiet, mathematical, abstract enterprise that avoids all agitation. Although a flaring, short-lived enthusiasm might in discouragement wish for a calamity simply in order to have a sense of dynamic life forces, disturbance is of no more assistance to its successor, apathy, than working with a surveyor's level. If an insurrection at its peak is so like a volcanic explosion that a person cannot hear himself speak, leveling at its peak is like a deathly stillness in which a person can hear himself breathe, a deathly stillness in which nothing can rise up but everything sinks down into it, impotent.
>
> (R 310–19, quoting from TA 84/SKS 8:79)

If leveling finally results in impotency that is deep alienation, passion can lead to potency that is rich resonance. We point out that passion was the fourth essential element of dance in our discussion above.

How one relates to the world matters. Rosa sees Kierkegaard emphasizing "that it is the 'inner actuality' of relations—to nature, to other people, to the arts, to one's own life—which modernity's reflective, distant, abstract attitude toward the world (as epitomized by paper money, a thin, dry abstraction through which world becomes attainable) is causing to die off and disappear":

> A passionate, tumultuous age wants to *overthrow everything, set aside everything*. An age that is revolutionary but also reflecting and devoid of passion changes the expression of power into a *dialectical tour de force: it lets everything remain but subtly drains the meaning out of it; rather than culminating in an uprising, it exhausts the inner actuality of relations in a tension of reflection that lets everything remain and yet has transformed the whole of existence into an equivocation that in its facticity is—while entirely privately [privatissime] a dialectical fraud interpolates a secret way of reading—that it is not*.
>
> (R 319, quoting from TA 77/SKS 8:73)

A preliminary draft stated that "the individual more or less knows that it [the "tension of reflection" entailed in this fraudulent dialectical equivocation] essentially is meaningless". (*TA*, *Supplement*, 131/*Pap*. VII[1] B 117:1 n.d., 1845–45). It is also "the individual" who avoids the "chatter" that traffics in reflection and annuls "the passionate distinction between being silent and speaking. Only the person [or individual] who can remain essentially silent can speak essentially, can act essentially. Silence is inwardness" (TA 97/SKS 8:91).

Rosa's commentary continues by noting that "Kierkegaard understands those relationships to the world that remain available as lacking inwardness, as being in a way static and mechanical", for "in the language of resonance theory, the resonant wire has stopped vibrating": "The coiled springs of life-relationships, which are what they are only because of qualitatively distinguishing passion, lose their resilience; the qualitative expression of difference between opposites is no longer the law for the relation of inwardness to each other in the relation. Inwardness is lacking, and to that extent the relation does not exist or the relation is an inert cohesion" (R 319, quoting from *TA* 78/SKS 8:73–74). The disease has spread as well to politics, which in our time of Trump and authoritarian dictators we experience in spades. Kierkegaard's discerning gift of observation allowed him to see that modernity's "political relationships, both among citizens and between citizens and the authorities, are likewise characterized by resonancelessness":

> The citizen does not relate himself in the relation but is a spectator computing the problem: the relation of a subject to his king; for there is a period when committee after committee is set up, as long as there still are people who in full passion want to be, each individually, the specific person he is supposed to be, but it all finally ends with the whole age becoming a committee. . . . The relation as such is impeccable, for it is on its last legs inasmuch as they do not essentially relate to each other in the relation, but the relation itself has become a problem in which the parties like rivals in a game watch each other instead of relating to each other, and count, as it is said, each other's verbal avowals of relation as a substitute for resolute mutual giving in the relation.
>
> (R 319–20, quoting from TA 79/SKS 8:74)

In Rosa's view, Kierkegaard interprets "this widespread loss of resonance, the development of mute relationships to the world", as "a direct result of the increase of humanity's share of the world": "Generally speaking, compared to a passionate age, a reflective age devoid of passion *gains in extensity what it loses in intensity*" (R 320, quoting TA 97/SKS 8:90). In a final point, Rosa contends that "Kierkegaard's diagnosis fully corresponds to Friedrich Nietzsche's view that the cultural death of God has ushered in a post-heroic, passionless age which sees the world as "a gateway to a thousand deserts, still and cold", and then quotes from Nietzsche's "The Madman", his famous passage in *The Gay Science* (R 320).

### *3.2. Adaptive Transformation*

Within Rosa's theory, the dialectical relation of resonance and alienation means that resonance arises in response to the foreign or the alien. As the alien is encountered, a dialogical process can be initiated in which adaptive transformation ensues and resonant experience results. On this front of encountering the alien, Kierkegaard was exceptionally well-equipped. He possessed amazing skills of observation, a powerful mind for logically distinguishing between nuanced differences among the items he was observing, and unique communication gifts to give clear expression to his interpretations in writing. These robust capacities provided him with a sound foundation for being able to operate as a keen and astute phenomenologist of human experience. He could readily recognize the foreign or alien that he encountered in his outer experiences, and he recognized in his inward relating that he himself possessed certain characteristics that placed him in the foreign or alien category as perceived by others. Contributing to his "strangeness" or being set apart from normal people were the malicious attacks (complicated by his all but asking to be so abused) by the satirical-political weekly magazine *The Corsair*, whose writers lampooned

him and whose cartoonist, Peter Klæstrup, caricatured him with unflattering depictions: of Kierkegaard as having a "humpback" or a condition of an excessive curvature of the spine in the upper back and as occasionally wearing clothes that did not fit him. Possibly also contributing to his "difference" was, first, the fact of his being one of the most frequently seen walkers on Copenhagen's *Stroget*, or poplar pedestrian walkway, where on his epic strolls he continually conversed arm-in-arm with various Copenhageners or Københavner in what he regarded before 1846 as "one great social gathering" in which refreshing "air baths" took place; and second, the perception of him as being relatively wealthy due to the inheritance from his father and putatively being a genius also might have contributed to his being alienated from some ([14] (pp. 395–402) and [15] (pp. 127–144)). Matching his capacity for identifying the alien was his capacity for identifying that which is not alien but rather more healthy, whole, positive, salvific, or resonant. Kierkegaard had great appreciation for the true, the good, and the beautiful, which he found manifested within many quarters of life. These potent capacities to identify the alien and alienation and the healthy or resonant provided him reasons for wanting to implement change, to introduce transformation toward greater resonant relationships, be it in his life or in the lives of others.

Kierkegaard throughout his years as an adult seemed to possess this desire for adaptive transformation, but his strategy for bringing about such change underwent a shift as evinced by the transition from his first authorship to his second authorship that occurred in 1847. Kierkegaard wrote in his journal in 1847, with no date given: "From now on there should be a shift into the domain of the specifically Christian (KJN 4:185, NB2:115/SKS 20:186, NB2:115)". Undergirding this change in authorship was the realization that his strategy of indirect communication was not sufficiently efficacious. A new approach of a more direct style was required. The direct communication of his signed writings now needed to become the favored norm rather than the indirect communication of the pseudonymous writings.

Another chief aspect of adaptive transformation is dispositional resonance, which is a posture giving a person the openness to encounter alienation and the willingness to permit and even desire self-transformation that leads to new forms and degrees of resonant transformations in the world. For Kierkegaard, faith plays a chief and maybe the primary role in establishing a resonant disposition. Merold Westhal dedicates 13 chapters to treating different aspects of Kierkegaard's concept of faith as expressed under three of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms [16][12]. Presented by Johannes de Silentio in the work *Fear and Trembling* is the view of "faith as the highest passion": this situates faith in the domain of the heart, which "signifies the deepest inner source of our life", and means that as "a matter of our emotional lives", faith is so significant because it is what unites all human life", "especially the will and the affections, our desires and our loves" [16] (pp. 102–103).

We learn in *Fear and Trembling* that faith in its passion is involved in a double movement: the first movement goes out to the infinite, to God, and resigns all else in life's finitude; but then in the second movement there is a going back to the finite, and in that movement God gives back the finitude that had been relinquished in the first move. This twofold movement is that of the knight of faith, who as a gifted dancer engages in this dialectic of faith whereby "after having made the movements of infinity, it makes the movements of finitude" (FT 38/SKS 3:89). Like the most gifted ballet dancer, the knight of faith, be it Abraham in relation to his son Isaac, Søren in relation to his beloved Regina, or any human being attempting to relate to God in an accelerating secular world while relating to any cherished finite reality, faith functions as a beautiful resonant disposition that is capable of affirming God and renouncing the world, and then completes faith's dance movement by receiving from God the world that has been given up and is able now to relate to that world as a relativized reality that can be appropriately, resonantly, related to. Here, in faith, we encounter again passion, the fourth element of dance, which we have already encountered as depicted in *Two Ages* as characterizing the age of revolution; and we encounter here the first element of dance: movement.

Faith also serves well as a resonant disposition through its expectancy. Published in the same year as *Fear and Trembling* was Kierkegaard's 1843 upbuilding discourse entitled "The Expectancy of Faith", in which he notes that faith "is the only unfailing good, because it can be had only by constantly being acquired and can be acquired only by constantly being generated" (EUD 14/SKS 3:21). Faith's movement, therefore, is not a one-and-done dance but a dance that needs to be repeated over and over again, in what we could call a rhythmic pattern. The companion piece to *Fear and Trembling* is the writing *Repetition* under the pseudonym Constantin Constantius, whose name exemplifies the very subject matter of the book. In this writing we see this theme of rhythm presented as an attribute and defining necessity of faith: for "repetition is the daily bread that satisfies with blessing", it is "a beloved wife of whom one never wearies", and while "it takes courage to will repetition", for the one who wills repetition, "the more emphatically she is able to realize this, the more profound a human being she is" (R 132). And here we encounter the third element of dance: rhythm. Faith operates in relation to the future, to possibilities of the future, and to its expectancy regarding future possibilities, in which it "possesses the only power that can conquer the future"; "and only the life of the one who conquers the future becomes strong and sound", and, we could add, resounding or resonant (EUD 16–17/SKS 3:22–4). People can put their focus on expectation, but then one is anticipating a particular outcome to eventuate from the future, and this person then moves away from herself in accepting instead the world's anticipation concerning what would be good to take place. Faith, alternatively, keeps the focus on expectancy rather than expectation, and that means focusing on oneself and the relation one has to the eternal, which as "the ground of the future" is that through which "the future can be fathomed" and the future can be conquered; faith, then, "is the eternal power in a human being" which empowers faith's expectancy of a conquered future that bestows an assurance of victory over whatever might come one's way, and a confidence in the Pauline claim (Romans 3:28) that all things work together for good for those who love God (EUD 19/SKS 3:26). Faith, therefore, is the "one expectancy that will not be disappointed" (EUD 28/SKS 3:33). Here, faith orients itself steadfastly to God rather than the world and gains the optimistic posture that is had prior to and apart from any and all particular occurrences from the future that might transpire; then the world receives the benefits of this person of faith because of her openness to the alien features of life and her readiness to act so as to adaptively transform such alienation to one extent or another in introducing or heightening resonance. Besides faith's passion, we can see that faith's expectancy is another important aspect of it being a resonant disposition.

Finally, there is the famous formulation of faith offered in *The Sickness unto Death* by Anti-Climacus. He writes: "The formula that describes the state of the self when despair is completely rooted out is this: in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it" (SUD 14/SKS 11:128). Later he defines sin as: "before God in despair not to will to be oneself, or before God in despair to will to be oneself"; and then he clarifies that "sin is despair" and that the opposite of sin is faith, which is: "that the self in being itself and in willing to be itself rests transparently in God" (SUD 81–2/SKS 11:193–4)[13]. Christian faith brings one before God and "the self takes on a new quality and qualification by being a self directly before God," so that this self can be called "the theological self" (SUD 79/SKS 11:191). In that direct relationship one is empowered by the divine power that established oneself, and this theme of resting transparently in God can surely be interpreted as having pantheistic or panentheistic overtones: here, one has a place or a spot where one can deal with life's possibilities and necessities in making decisions that give shape to one's actuality as a self. I think this place is the same spot where one makes the double movement of faith, and where one operates in faith's expectancy rather than faith's expectation. Anti-Climacus distinguishes between becoming and becoming oneself; these are two different movements, or we could say, these are two different types of dancing: the first is more the outer dance of the universe or the world, while the second is the inner dance of the self. He writes that trenchant, fascinating, bewitching sentence: "To become is a movement away from that place, but to become

oneself is a movement in that place" (SUD 36/SKS 11:149). This thought, it seems, has a Hegelian flavor to it. Above, we mentioned Hegel's thoughts on freedom as allowing us to feel at home. For Hegel, spirit goes out from itself, but in coming back to itself it becomes free and in so doing is truly at home with itself. This is the implicit God-relation becoming explicit. This image of the implicit or immanent unity of the human with the divine in creation funds language of the relatedness of the human to God, but this gift needs to be fulfilled by tending to the task of making explicit what is implicit, and this happens as the essential relatedness to God is brought to fulfillment in a living, actual relationship of the human to God. This idea is affirmed by Grundtvig, but also by Mynster, Martensen, and, yes, Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard deals with this notion of "the spot" also in *Without Authority* (WA 7, 27–8/SKS 11:11, 29–30), and it seems relevant as well to his thoughts on first originality and acquired originality (WA 38–9/SKS 11:40)[14]. These thoughts on the place or the spot, I think, can be highlighted for their being a relevant example of responsiveness, the fifth essential element of dance.

The last topic covered in *Sickness* is entitled "The Continuance of Sin" and one of the issues dealt with is that of the forgiveness of sins, which will be the primary concern of our treatment of the objective and subjective supporting resources for sponsoring resonance, that is, our third and final topic of the axes of resonance, to which we now turn.

### *3.3. Resonant Axes*

Within the diagonal axis of resonance, the world of things speaks to us. In the City Museum of Copenhagen one can see a few personal items or things that likely were quite important to Kierkegaard, such as his engagement ring, his key ring, and his meerschaum pipe, which is a pipe known for its unparalleled flavor because of having only a slight impact on the taste of tobacco and its delivery of a cool, dry smoke that allows the tobacco's undertones and subtleties to be experienced. One can imagine Kierkegaard having a resonant relationship with these things and others such as a walking stick. However, I will focus instead on another item in that museum, one of his writing desks. Kierkegaard utilized standing writing desks because he usually wrote standing up, as did many other well-known authors such as Thomas Jefferson (who designed his own "tall desk"), Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf, Winston Churchill, and Ernest Hemingway, among others. Kierkegaard apparently had multiple desks set up in different rooms, so that he could be sure to capture a thought that happened to come to him while in a particular room, and so that he could move from desk to desk, allowing the creative juices to marinate and flow while he was moving, thinking, and writing. We could say that his many desks encouraged movements that helped his writing process take on a dancelike quality. Here, again, in relation to the writing desk as an example of the diagonal resonant axis, we have mention of movement, the first essential element of dance.

In the preface to *Either/Or*, the fictional editor Victor Eremita narrates the account of finding the papers published in these two volumes. They are finally found when, in desiring to get some money out of a stuck money drawer, he takes a hatchet to his ancient writing desk (an escritoire) he had purchased, and then the discovery takes place: "a secret door that I had never noticed before sprung open. This door closed off a compartment that I obviously had not discovered. Here to my great surprise I found a mass of papers, the papers that constitute the contents of the present publication" (EO 1:6/SKS 1:viii). What I want to underscore, though, is the love affair that Victor Eremita comes to have with this writing desk, from first spotting it in a secondhand store and being immediately attracted to it, fixing his eyes on it every day as he passes it on his walking route, gaining a history with that desk so that it becomes a necessity for him to see it daily, the building of the desire to purchase this desk that so infatuates him, initially being rejected after offering a low price for it but then finally purchasing it, and then being able to appreciate this wonderful writing desk with all its drawers and compartments within his own space once he has moved it into his apartment (EO 1:4–5/SKS 1:vi–vii). I think it would be difficult for someone to compose this intriguing imaginative account of the love affair with a writing desk if there were not

to some significant extent an appreciation for this "thing" that is so effectively brought to life as an important reality, with which the editor has had a meaningful and, yes, resonant relationship. As much time as Kierkegaard must have spent putting pen to paper while standing and writing at his various standing writing desks, we can understand how he himself could have developed the very same type of relation of resonance that he bequeaths to his pseudonymous editor. This account dances, as so much of Kierkegaard's writings do, because of his acute responsiveness to his context, which includes his writing desks. And here, again, we have an example of responsiveness, dance's fifth essential element.

Despite Kierkegaard's reputation for putting all the emphasis on the single individual, he actually had a lot to say about social relationships, or the horizontal axis of resonance. For the sake of expediency, however, we will be covering both the horizonal and the vertical axes of resonance by discussing the single issue of forgiveness. Rosa included the notion of forgiveness under the sphere of friendship of the horizontal axis of resonance. He stated that "the capacity for and process of *friendship*" "is highly significant for our theory of resonance and, moreover, is indispensable to friendship, in love, and ultimately wherever resonant relationships exist" (R 214). In his discussion of forgiveness Rosa draws on the monograph by Klaus-Michael Kodalle [20] (pp. 376–371), who in turn draws on Kierkegaard, and Rosa reports that both of these thinkers, first, understand forgiveness as "breaking through the perspective of moral, legal, or economic calculation that is concerned only with determining who is right or who owes what to whom", and, second, recognize that "*the eyes* are the medium through which this healing transformation occurs", for "the eyes are the central human organ of resonance, and it is the *forgiving look* which is able to re-establish two people's capacity for resonance and thus their friendship as a loving, responsive relationship" (R 214). Then he adds another comment on Kierkegaard: "For Kierkegaard, the power of forgiveness lies in the possibility of overcoming a mute relationship to the world defined by coldness and indifference: a genuine appeal for forgiveness is capable of arousing a 'holy trembling' in the subject thus addressed" (R 214, quoting [20] (p. 223)). We definitely see, on this topic of forgiveness, that Kierkegaard's view is resonating with Rosa.

Kierkegaard's reflections on forgiveness just about always focus on the forgiveness of sins, which he is convinced can only come from God or God in Christ. That is why he would first of all place the reality of the forgiveness of sins in its true, fundamental axis of origin, which for him would be the axis of vertical rather than horizontal resonance, although he sees forgiveness as being critically relevant to the axis of horizontal resonance as well. To the statement in his 1847 journal entry quoted above in which Kierkegaard announced a needed shift in emphasis, as from that point onward "there should be a shift into the domain of the specifically Christian", he also added a word on forgiveness, and more particularly, on the forgiveness of sins: "Then 'the forgiveness of sins' must be put forward. Everything is to be concentrated on this point; before anything can be done, it must first be reclaimed as a paradox. In these times Christianity has become nonsense; therefore one must take on a double task: first, that of making the matter more difficult, through and through (KJN 4:185, NB2:115/SKS 20:187, NB2:115)". Making Christianity more difficult is the necessary first task, because only after that is accomplished will accomplishing the second task of actually becoming—or attempting to become—an authentic Christian, become possible.

For Kierkegaard, the theme of the forgiveness of sins has huge significance for both the horizontal and vertical axes of resonance. Therefore, in dwelling more robustly on this singular theme of the forgiveness of sins, we will be addressing Kierkegaard's thinking on both of those axes. Our discussion will also sort out why he thought this theme needed to be emphasized and, in the process, further fill out the nature and dimensions of his critique. One interpretive answer to that question of emphasis is that the forgiveness of sins must be emphasized because finding clarity on this crucially important acoustic event will at the same time clarify much about the self, the Other, and the others, and how, in a secular age in which there is much confusion about the appropriate relating of these three, the desired

resounding or resonance can come to characterize the fitting interrelationships of these three realities.

Kierkegaard came to think about forgiveness in relation to the notion of "forgetness" and this is first noted in a journal entry dated 16 August 1847: "Until now I have protected myself against my melancholia with intellectual labor that keeps it at bay. Now—in the faith that God in forgiveness has forgotten the portion of guilt there is within it—I must myself try to forget it, though not through distraction, not by distancing myself from it, but in God, so that when I think of God, I must think that he has forgotten it, and thus myself learn to dare to forget it in forgiveness (KJN 4:194, NB 2:136/SKS 20:136, NB2 195–96.)". A little more than 13 months later, on 29 September 1848, Kierkegaard published another of his major books, *Works of Love*. Daniel Esparza [21], building on Kevin Hart's notion of "spiritual acoustics" [22], gives an intriguing analysis of Kierkegaard's view of the forgiveness of sins, centering his inquiry on a particular passage in *Works of Love*. That passage, which brings together vertical and horizontal axes of resonance, reads:

> Forgiveness **is** forgiveness, your forgiveness is your forgiveness; your forgiveness of another is your own forgiveness; the forgiveness which you give you receive, not contrariwise that you give the forgiveness which you receive. It is as if Christianity would say: pray to God humbly and believing in your forgiveness, for God really is compassionate in such a way as no human being is, but if you will test how it is with respect to the forgiveness, *then observe yourself*. If honestly before God you wholeheartedly forgive your enemy (but remember that if you do, God sees it), then you dare hope also for your forgiveness, *for it is one and the same*.
>
> (*Works of Love*, 1962 Hong translation, 348–49/WL 380)/SKS, 9:360, quoted in [21] (p. 198), and italics are Esparza's)

In discussing the forgiveness of sins in *The Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard through his pseudonym Anti-Climacus states: "so wonderfully is the life of the spirit acoustically constructed, so wondrously are the ratios of distance established (SUD 114/SKS 11:224)". The life of the spirit as so wonderfully acoustically constructed, and the ratios of distance as so wondrously established. The meaning here is not immediately transparent, but acoustics and ratios of distance do speak of resonance, so they both are worth a closer look.

Kierkegaard's Johannes Climacus, in *Philosophical Fragments* published in 1844, in discussing "offense at the paradox", points out that even when the understanding thinks that it has originated the offense over the paradox, it is actually the paradox itself that has originated the offense, thus making the understanding's claim a mere echo and "an acoustical illusion" since actually "it is the paradox that resounds in it [the offense]" (PF 51/SKS 4:217). One of Kierkegaard's teachers was the famous physicist and chemist Hans Christian Ørsted (1877–1851), who became famous with his 1820 discovery of electromagnetism, or the law of reciprocity or resonance between electrified bodies and the magnet, that electric currents create magnetic fields. The basis for his being appointed a professor of physics earlier at the University of Copenhagen in 1806 was the publication of his new experiments in which he gave an ingenious analysis of Ernst Chladni's (1756–1827) experimental work on "acoustic figures". In an 1808 conference he spoke about his research in the area of acoustics. Ørsted contends that, because of the universally applicable laws of nature: "On every planet vibrations are produced by the reciprocal action of bodies of the same kind as those by which sound is generated with us, . . . and this includes living bodies which too are affected by vibrations [23] (p. 113)"[15]. To make the case that the principle of reason that we know and rely upon applies at all points within the universe, he provides evidence from examples related to light and to sound, for "sounds are to the ear what forms are to the eye", and for sound the given examples are of what he calls "sound figures" and "sound forms": he explains sound figures by the fact that "wherever vibratory motion is given to a flat surface covered with dust, the same figure will be described in every part of the universe with us" ([23] (p. 114), and see also [24]). Esparza points out

that the German-born Austrian physicist and musician Chladni's famous experiment on sound figures "showed that, when resonating, a surface gets divided into regions that vibrate in opposite directions, bounded by dark, thick, 'nodal' lines where no vibration occurs" [21] (p. 209). Chladni's sound figures, like Ørsted's, make sound visible; and the notion of sound figures from the work of these two physicists received significant attention in Copenhagen. Esparza uses this information to interpret the above-quoted "Forgiveness **is** forgiveness" dictum as being a "sound figure", with "the **is** being the dark, thick nodal line marking the separation between one resonating region and the other", "the forgiveness of another and one's own forgiveness, the forgiveness given and the forgiveness received". Here we see the forgiveness of sins in the horizontal axis being differentiated from and juxtaposed to, yet united with, the forgiveness of sins in the vertical axis of resonance. Kierkegaard underscores this identity between God's forgiveness that I receive and the forgiveness of the other that I give: "God forgives you neither more nor less nor otherwise than **as** you forgive those who have sinned against you" (WL 380/SKS 9:360, the bold is in the original text).

On the matter of the logic of distance, Esparza points out how a resonant form of relating requires a certain respect for the distance maintained in the relationship. In *The Sickness unto Death*, Anti-Climacus explains that to despair of the forgiveness of sins and not to accept divine forgiveness, the sinner defiantly complains to God and wants to get directly right up into God's face in order to enter into close conflict with God; and yet in doing so, the sinner is making himself ever so much more distant from the God who is normally so close to us, and thus the sinner is becoming even more intensively absorbed in sin and entering deeper into despair. To say, "No, there is no forgiveness of sins", being forward with God in this way, ironically is to move oneself backward, for the speaker has made himself far away from God. Moving closer, then, can be a sign of moving far away. There is a confusion in the ratio of distance that afflicts the age, and Kierkegaard expresses this through his critical pseudonym: moving closer results in moving farther away. In a culture, such as that of Golden Age Denmark, where the ethical has been removed and "an authentic ethical word is seldom or never heard", "despairing of the forgiveness of sins is conceived erroneously more often than not": "Despairing of the forgiveness of sins is esthetically-metaphysically conceived as a sign of a deep nature, which is about the same as accepting naughtiness in a child as a sign of a deep nature" (SUD 114–15 SKS 11:224). The fundamental determination of "Thou shalt", which previously was "the sole regulative aspect of the human's relationship to God", has now been abolished from religion, bemoans Kierkegaard's Anti-Climacus, and while there is a reluctance to do away with God completely, people now replace the "Thou shalt" with an abstract "God-idea or concept of God", thinking again that this is "the sign of genius and of a deep nature" (SUD 115/SKS 11:224–5). Furthermore, while in paganism cursing was not customary because of a respect and solemnity for the mysterious reality harbored by the divine name, now in Christendom, because of the ubiquity of cursing, "God's name is the word that most frequently appears in daily speech and is clearly the word that is given the least thought and used most carelessly" (SUD 115–16/SKS 11:225). As we have seen, Kierkegaard's word for "the sin of despairing of the forgiveness of sins is *offense*" (SUD 116/SKS 11:225). People despair of being forgiven because it is offensive to think of oneself in the sinner category and as needing help from a source alien to one's own powers. The confusion of the culture is spiritual. In prolific cursing is seen a confusion in the expression of spirit, a confusion of the intimate or familiar use of the divine name which ironically gives expression to an alien or foreign relation. Disclosed is alienation rather than resonance. Clarifying the confusion about the forgiveness of sins can help to clarify Christianity's relation to its age[16].

Daniel Esparza introduces another interesting aspect of the logic of distance as regards his focal passage on the forgiveness of sins. He discusses Hamann in relation to the biblical verse 1 Corinthians 4:6, which reads in the *New Revised Standard Version*: "I have applied all this [μετεσχημάτισα or *meteschēmatisa*] to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, 'Nothing beyond what

is written,' so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against the other". Paul and Apollos have a close, resonant relationship, unlike the distant, alienating relationships of the Corinthians, who are urged to learn from their leaders, to overcome their distance and stop sowing division. Esparza explains:

> Leaning on the Pauline use of the word *meteschēmatisa*, Hamann calls the process *metaschematisieren* and extends its meaning way beyond biblical sources. As the Corinthian community learns through others, Hamann appreciates the present as legible only with reference to the future (as if pregnant with prophetic expectation) and the past as only understandable with reference to the present (as if fulfilled in the here-and-now). Past, present, and future are thus bound together and reciprocally clarified. [21] (p. 200)

Hamann concludes with his claim: "The future determines the present, and the present determines the past, as the purpose determines the nature and use of the means ([28] (pp. 45–46), as quoted in [21] (pp. 200–201))". Thus, Hamann's metaschematism has come to function, according to insights from James O'Flaherty, as a means by which distance is overcome "as a set of objective relationships" are substituted "for an analogous set of personal or existential relationships or the reverse, in order to determine, through the insight born of faith, their common meaning" [29] (pp. 17–19).

The suggestion of various scholars is that this Hamannian understanding of overcoming distance and bringing distant, more objective realities into resonance with more close-at-hand subjective realities is picked up by Kierkegaard and developed into his notion of contemporaneity [*samtighed*], which decisively influences his approach to the forgiveness of sins [21] (p. 200). Contemporaneity allows biblical events of the past to resonate with the person of faith in the present, canceling out the distance of time and allowing the Christ of the past to be present, making possible a "contemporaneity-with-Christ" that allows the distant "event of the incarnation to reverberate" or resonate in the present ([30] (p. 55), as referred to in [21] (p. 201))[17]. Therefore, another meaning of the *Works of Love* passage stating, "Forgiveness **is** forgiveness" is that the first forgiveness can refer to the forgiveness that took place in the Christ-event centuries ago, and the second forgiveness to that which is received by the person of faith who is contemporaneous with that event together with that person's forgiveness that is extended to others.

Finally, the ratio-of-distance theme is also discussed in the first Christian Address, "Watch Your Step in the Lord's House", in Part Three of Kierkegaard's *Christian Discourses*, titled "Thoughts that Wound from Behind—for Upbuilding", which I think can be effectively brought into relation to a discourse on Matthew 11:28 from Part Four of *Christian Discourses* titled "Discourses at the Communion on Fridays". I remind the reader that Kierkegaard, in the preface to *For Self-Examination*, urged his readers to read aloud (FSE 3/SKS 12:295); especially in the context of this essay, we can underscore how such reading aloud enhances the acoustical quality of the written word and thus its potency for being able to resound or resonate with the reader. Declared in the first of these two writings is that "God, the infinitely lofty one . . . can come very close to the lowliest, and yet God is in God's infinite loftiness" (*CD* 166/SKS 10:170). God's loftiness is not of the sort that makes a person feel uncomfortable because of being in the presence of one with star power, celebrity, or mighty governmental authority. Contrary to this, God's loftiness, despite being so great and of the highest category, is of such a nature that when you go up into the house of the Lord, this God of "infinite loftiness is very close to you, closer than you are to yourself, since God understands and discovers even your thoughts that you yourself do not understand" (*CD* 166/SKS 10:170). This infinitely lofty one is "the knower of hearts" who "understands only one kind of honesty, that a person's life expresses what he [or she] says", and anything less "is presumptuousness toward God" (*CD* 167/SKS 10:171). Therefore, one must be careful in entering the Lord's house because one can be called to truth about oneself, to get to know very effectually what self-denial is, to become aware of the danger of sin, and to be made a sinner (*CD* 168–73/SKS 10:172–6). But after this acoustic word has been heard in the house of God, and those present have heard the proclamation of being accomplices in

the suffering and death of Christ, and experienced a glaring guilt being placed upon their consciences, then in God's house "the one and only deliverance, the most blessed comfort is offered to you; the highest of all, God's friendship, God's grace in Christ Jesus is offered to you" (*CD* 174/SKS 10:177). We can supplement this good news with thoughts from the second writing on the verse from Matthew that reads: "Come here to me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest". Kierkegaard writes that the invitation is to come to the trustworthy inviter, the spiritual guide, that the Savior might provide the one thing needed, finding rest for the soul, and that this indeed God does in granting "rest in God through the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins" (*CD* 266–7/SKS 10:270–1). The notion of resting in God that we encounter here, and have encountered above, gestures toward this possibly being a panentheistic notion, and the fact that this resting in God is the result of a "trans" event, a transformation brought about by the forgiveness of sins, gestures toward this possibly being a pantransentheistic notion. But making the case for Kierkegaard as a pantransentheist, as mentioned early on, is not within the scope of this essay.

At the outset of the essay, the hope was expressed that exploring a possible rapprochement between Rosa and Kierkegaard might shed light on the theme of dancing in God as possibly a valuable theological motif around which to generate a cogent response to the challenges presented by our accelerating secular world[18]. Now, at essay's end, it is clear that that hope has been partially but not adequately fulfilled. However, we have learned some things toward that end which can be viewed as a modest contribution toward a larger project in which a more complete fulfillment of the goal will take place. We began the essay with some thoughts on dancing in God, and now we will conclude the essay with a few thoughts on that theme as it applies to Kierkegaard. In our discussion of Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology, we have gained some knowledge about his understanding of the relation between God and the world; we have also gleaned some insights into how the dancing-in-God theme can be discerned in his authorship and life, especially in manifesting the elements of dance. Here the task is to harvest those gleanings in the essay's brief last dance.

In Kierkegaard's writings, he makes reference to dance imagery quite frequently. We identified a couple of those instances: we mentioned the dance moves of the knight of faith as distinguished from those of the knight of infinite resignation in *Fear and Trembling*. The twofold movement of the knight of faith, involving relinquishing finitude and receiving finitude, respectively, gives expression to the first essential element of dance, movement. We spoke of Kierkegaard's movement in going from one writing desk to another. Additionally, that dance feature was seen in the discussion around logic of distance, for the forgiveness of sins too involves a double movement, the movements of receiving forgiveness within the vertical axis of resonance and of giving forgiveness within the horizontal axis of resonance, just as movement is integral to the notion of dancing in contemporaneity with Christ. Second, we pointed to Kierkegaard's concern for embodying within existence an intended goal or purpose as exemplifying bodiliness, which is the second essential element of dance. In stepping back and considering Søren's relation to the world as a whole, I think he would want us to recognize his attempt to embody his highest good, which centered on his relationship with God, as the most important feature of his life's dance. Bodiliness, in that sense, was key for his existential tango with the divine. Rhythm is dance's third essential element, and Kierkegaard's accenting the importance of repetition in life exhibits the presence of that element in his thought and life. The consistency and sureness of human freedom come about when repetition's rhythm is of the appropriate sort; and when it is, resonance is likely to be served. Passion, the fourth essential element of dance, made itself apparent in the overview, most particularly in the passion of the age of revolution and in the passion of faith. Kierkegaard is not against reflection, but he thinks that reflection shorn of passion will not result in dance that is edifying: passion is needed for reflection to find expression in existence that dances. Responsiveness is the fifth essential element of dance. Rosa links resonance very closely with responsiveness. Our account of Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology has attempted to indicate ways in which he manages to

shape his thinking and writing to function in the service of resonance, and so, we could say, in the service of responsiveness. More pointedly, though, his relation to his writing desk was presented as an example of the diagonal resonant axis being at work and as indicating his responsiveness to his context, as were his thoughts on the place or the spot as a solitary space for gathering oneself in thoughtful response to all that is going on in one's life.

Thus, the five essential elements of dance have been identified as possessing some level of operational significance within Kierkegaard's critical philosophical theology. The other factor that cannot be left out of the picture is transformation, which dance brings about and which is at the center of Kierkegaard's life and work. It can be said, then: If the bodily, rhythmic, passionate, responsive movements of individual and corporate human beings constitute dancing, and if that dancing serves an edifying transformation, then such dancing can be evidenced in Kierkegaard's envisioning of the God-world relation and the manner in which life within that relation might be carried out so that resonance flourishes. That's a noble and helpful vision for empowering people to function well in our accelerating secular world. And the fixings are there, I believe, for making the case for Kierkegaard's pantransentheism.

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## Notes

1 For a fuller discussion of pantransentheism in relation to pantheism and panentheism I refer the reader to [1].

2 Here I refer the reader to [2].

3 For a fuller account of these two Aristotelian notions see [3] (pp. 254–255).

4 In [5] (p. 13). Hereafter this book will be cited parenthetically in the text with the shorthand reference of SA followed by the page or pages.

5 In [6] (p. 309), Rosa states that "no date can be given for the transition from 'classical' modernity to late modernity": "There are, however, good reasons to suggest that critical changes occurred around 1990, as the political revolution surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, the transition of post-Fordist just-in-time production models, the deregulation of financial markets, and the digital revolution, all massively drove dynamization". Hereafter the book *Resonance* will be cited parenthetically in the text with the shorthand reference of R followed by the page or pages.

6 On the controversial claim of the world responding, Rosa is willing to remain agnostic about the exact manner in which the world or one of its segments responds (see R 169), although he does address this, as we will see, in his discussion of the diagonal axis of resonance.

7 Rosa's dissertation in his graduate studies was "a comprehensive critical exploration of the methodological and normative implications of Charles Taylor's work for political philosophy" (SA xxvii). He has learned much from Taylor on the notions of resonance and alienation being discussed here (SA xxxi) as well as on the key concept of "strong evaluations". Carrying out the task of a social critique according to the normative criterion of the quality of resonant relationships requires utilizing strong evaluations, a notion which Taylor understands as driving the process of self-interpretation insofar as they "determine the *relationship* between subjects and the world" by determining "the significance and relevance things and in particular possibilities of being and action have for a given subject": being situated in the world means identifying one's moral space in that world and thus one's strong evaluations about what is important in life and what really matters on which one's moral posture depends (R 133).

8 Here Rosa is differentiating his view from that of Axel Honneth, a social theorist with whom he shares much. He believes that his resonance theory is capable of accommodating recognition theory, while Honneth's recognition theory is unable to do the same for resonance theory.

9 In this discussion Rosa draws on the provocative book, [7] (pp. 1–16).

10 One factor contributing to the issue of Hegel's status as the invisible elephant behind many of the deliberations occurring within the articulating of the theory of resonance might be the vocational identity of Hartmut Rosa. He mentions that some very important questions, such as the nature of the good life and his whole focus on developing "a sociology of our relationship to the world", have been slow to gain a central place within the discipline of sociology. That is because sociology emerged around 1900 and "was able to establish itself only by successfully differentiating itself from philosophy" and psychology, and the critical quest for the true, the good, and the beautiful remained under the jurisdiction of philosophy (R 17). This seems to be a lingering vocational concern. He rightfully takes pride in being a sociologist. There is a laudable desire to be true to the discipline of sociology and operate first and foremost as a sociologist, while of course gaining and using helpful knowledge from all of the disciplines. I am pleased to honor Rosa as an eminent sociologist from whom we can learn so much. But I am also pleased to

discern that Hegel's philosophy has contributed to his theory of resonance. On the matter of critically appropriating thoughts from Hegel, Rosa's contrasting experiences of alienation from experiences of resonance, especially "resonant experiences in the domains of art, religion, and nature" in his earlier book *Social Acceleration*, prompted an insightful comment from his translator, Jonathan Trejo-Mathys: "This is another way in which Rosa's project can be read as a means of retrieving Hegelian themes that is different enough to an alternative, within contemporary critical theory, to Honneth's recognition-theoretical way of doing the same. In particular, one could see Honneth as focusing on Hegelian freedom in the institutional and social domain of objective spirit, i.e., roughly, the family or intimate personal life, civil society and the economy, and the polity and its laws, while Rosa focuses on Hegelian freedom in the 'higher' domains of absolute spirit (though Rosa substitutes the Romantic emphasis on nature for the place of philosophy in the Hegelian schema). See [9,10]. (SA xxxi and 368, note 62.) In the later book *Resonance*, it seems that Honneth's recognition-theoretical work centering on the arena of objective spirit has found greater place within Rosa's deliberations on the horizontal axis of resonance, and the sphere of history has been added to the domains of religion, nature, and art as the higher domains of absolute spirit.

11 R 490, note 23 in which he quotes this sentence from Kierkegaard's 1849 *The Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air*, included in [13], 322/SKS 11:16.

12 We can see the expansive nature of Kierkegaard's view of faith simply by iterating that, in Westphal's interpretation, we encounter in Kierkegaard's writing views of faith as: the task of a lifetime; trust in divine promises; obedience to divine commands; the teleological suspension of reason; the highest passion; the reception of revelation; the happy passion that overcomes offense; the passionate appropriation of an objective uncertainty; a leap and a striving; a striving pathos that goes against reason; willing to be oneself—before God; and contemporaneity with Christ—without offense.

13 For a more detailed consideration see [17].

14 See [18] for Green's argument that implied in Kierkegaard's claims in teaching Christian virtue is that the woman who was a sinner becomes not only loving but love itself. The distinction between originality and acquired originality is also briefly discussed in [19] (pp. 157–158).

15 Ørsted presents in this work a philosophical-theological viewpoint that seems situated within panentheism, while making a pretty strong affirmation of elements of pantheism and avoiding an atheistic stance. For example, he writes: "Matter is not an inanimate existence, but an expression of activity, by which all the pervading laws of Nature are determined and restrained. The principle of action and the order in existence are not, therefore, two distinct objects, but one living, constantly creating, and regulating totality of Reason, an eternal living Reason, which is, God!" He states (347) that he regards "nature as the revelation of an infinite and living reason", and considers "spiritual nature itself as a part of" that nature, just as he views "what according to another mode of representation, we correctly call natural gifts, as a spark of the Divinity". Ørsted contends (181) that God does not act once at the beginning of time in creating the world; rather, on the nature of God, he feels he needs to show what a misunderstanding that view represents, for "it presupposes, namely, that God only once acted and then ceased"; in place of that it must be said that "God constantly acts, and constantly makes laws; were it possible for this to cease, the world would immediately cease; God incessantly creates the entire infinite manifold existence, and this lives in God".

16 In the *Postscript*, CUP 1, 517–18/SKS 7:453–454, Johannes Climacus identifies a somewhat similar confusion resulting when the particular context of life and the qualitative dialectic operative within it are not taken into account: "If someone, for example, wanted to make everything comic, without any basis, one would see at once that his comic effect is irrelevant, because it lacks a basis in any sphere, and the inventor himself would be made comic, from the viewpoint of the ethical sphere, because he himself, as an existing person must have his basis in existence in one way or another". Although the forgiveness of sins is the paradox *par excellence*, which presents an affront to reason or dialect, there is a qualitative dialectic by which the forgiveness of sins operates and that needs to be respected, and for Kierkegaard that dialectic entails a structured relating of Other, self, and others. Also, in "The Woman Who Was a Sinner", a discourse at the Communion on Fridays closely related to themes in *Sickness*, Kierkegaard employs the logic of distance creatively in tying forgiveness to forgetness by linking the fact that the actual name of "the woman who was a sinner" has been forgotten, and her sins likewise, like her name and her being, have entered into oblivion and, as forgotten, have been forgiven (*WA* 142/SKS 11:278). And the last sentence of the discourse exalts this woman "who loved much, she who therefore also found rest for her soul in loving much—yes, or in the forgiveness of her many sins—yes, or she who, because she loved much, found rest in this, that her many sins were forgiven her" (*WA* 144/SKS 11:280). Resting in God, a prominent Kierkegaardian theme, here makes its appearance. I am grateful to one of the blind reviewers who suggests reference be made to three recent treatments of this important themne of resting in God: [25–27].

17 Stokes, in discussing "Imaginative Distance" (54–59), makes the interesting claim that Charles Taylor's view of "homogenized time"—that refuses to consider certain past "legendary events" featuring the actions of "Gods or heroes" as happening in a different, higher period of time or plane of being that gives it a mythological aura—leads to people coming to accept themselves "as occupying the *same* realm of temporality as those in the distant past, including in the biblical past". Stokes holds that this Enlightenment view from David Hume is agreed to by both Hamann and Kierkegaard, with the latter thinking that this simply is the way it is, and this heightens the exceptional character of the Incarnation as paradox and thus its capacity for causing offense.

18 I want to thank one of the blind reviewers for the suggestion that the notion of resonance, as used in relation to the "dance" of God with the world, resonates with both the Kantian and Heidegerrian understanding of attunement and "mood" (*Stimmung*). Pointed out is the fact that Kant's writings on beauty and the sublime and the synchronicity of reason and imagination would

provide a fruitful expansion of this topic. Also, the reviewer advises that the same can be said of Heidegger's view attunement in relation to environmentality, regions, and our general being-in-the-world. Contended is that both of these authors certainly point towards a kind of "dance" with regards to our relationships to both beauty and meaning.

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