

## **Culture as Aliveness. Creating ecological reciprocity**

*By Andreas Weber*

In our mainstream thinking, culture is set against “nature”. “Nature” implies determinism, the opposite of the experience and creation of meaning, which is culture’s domain. In the Anthropocene and its accompanying double crisis of global heating and life extinction, we need to rethink this classical opposition. It is very well possible that the reluctance to understand the whole – and not only the human part of – reality as alive has led to the contemporary impasse of a catastrophic destruction of the biosphere. What if we understood life not as a mechanical phenomenon, but itself as the embodied creation of meaning? And what if reciprocity was at the heart of ecology? If life – the experience of meaning, inwardness and value – is shared among all constituents of the world, we can start rebuild our relationships to this living cosmos. The talk will explore how our shared aliveness can give us urgent clues about ecological citizenship.

### Biography:



Andreas Weber (\* 1967) is a biologist, philosopher and writer. Andreas holds degrees in Marine Biology (Msc) and Cultural Studies (PhD). He has worked with theoretical biologist Francisco Varela in Paris. Andreas' philosophical and literary work is focusing on a re-evaluation of our understanding of the living. He understands organisms as subjects and hence the biosphere as a meaning-creating and poetic reality.

Accordingly, Andreas holds that an economy inspired by nature should not be designed as a mechanistic optimization machine (as it currently is), but rather as an ecosystem which transforms mutual sharing of matter and energy in a deepened meaning. Andreas puts forth his ideas in several books (translated in a variety of languages). He contributes to major newspapers and magazines and is regularly lecturing and giving workshops. He is teaching Ecophilosophy at the University of Fine Arts, Berlin, is Visiting Professor at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy, and holds an Adjunct Professorship at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, India. Andreas is married and has two adult children. He lives in Berlin, Germany, and in Italy near Genoa.