

Laudatio Hartmut Rosa, profesor and honorary doctor
University of Humanistic Studies

Dear professor Rosa,

It is a great honor for me explain why we as UoSH want to grant you a honorary doctorate. You are a highly esteemed and original social theorist. Your work has been extensively cited, translated and awarded. It enjoys ample recognition among both sociologists and philosophers as well as the wider public. Your two latest academic books alone, on social acceleration and resonance, have more than 4000 citations.

Your work is affiliated with and inspired by the the Frankfurt School, in the footsteps of scholars like Habermas, Honneth and Fraser. The Frankfurt School and its heirs have inspired this University ever since its start 30 years ago. As a university that explicitly aspires to contribute to meaningful lives in a just society, the Frankfurt School has guided our reflections on the normative and empirical foundations of critical social theory.

As one of its heirs, you have nevertheless developed a clear innovative voice of your own, built around the concepts of *social accellaration* and *resonance*. You consider social acceleration to be a cornerstone of modernization, on the same level as rationalization and individualization. Due to technological and social changes, we are subject to social acceleration: our public and private lives have been speeding up. We feel constantly time pressured.

Social acceleration comes with exciting new options for engagement and communication. But, you argue, social acceleration also gives rise to instrumental, competitive relationships, that you typecast as deaf, mute and lacking resonance. Moreover, practices that cannot speed up, such as care and democracy, come to stand out as drowsy and dull. Care and democracy seem to become slower and are met with ever more impatience, as Maria van der Harst just discussed.

Your work helps to explain and connect various seemingly disparate social developments. Like the rise of populism and authoritarianism. Or the paradox that with the rise of individualization, people depend ever more on their families. Or the increasing prevalence of depression and burnout. All this is of great importance to our studies in ethics of care, spiritual guidance, humanism, secularization, citizenship, participation and humanization.

But your work is not just critical; it also points to alternatives, beyond social acceleration. Resonance is your answer to the problems that social acceleration creates. Resonance is the vibrating thread between us and the world around us. The concept of resonance is affiliated to Habermas' communicative action, and Honneths and Frasers' concepts of recognition and participation. However, resonance enriches these with bodily experiences, particularly with sound and vibration. Resonance is an active, engaged, emotional relationship with the world in which both both parties reciprocally move and transform each other. Resonance can occur between people but also between us and the material world. Resonance is not necessarily harmonious, it can also be confusing, painful and conflictuous.

Your work also encourages us to not only write for academics, but also reach out to a broader audience. You adress education practitioners about the importance of schools as resonant

spaces. You address politics, civil society and social movements, by writing on the refugee crisis, terrorism civic engagement, democracy and European political culture, as well as on the quality of work. You propose new organizational forms that allow for more resonance.

There can be no doubt that you will receive more honorary doctorates. We are therefore proud that we as UoHS are the first to grant you this title.

Today we honor your work but also you as a person. You are one of the few scholars who practice what they preach. In seminars as well as informal conversations, you have shown an admirable openness and enthusiasm to discuss criticisms on your work. You constantly show what it means to seek and create resonance. So you do not only write about resonance: you are also the embodiment of resonance par excellence!

Congratulations!

Evelien Tonkens, University of Humanistic Studies at Utrecht, The Netherlands, January 29
2019