

# Education for Peacefulness in the Light of Relationship Ethics: Resonance, Empathy and the Tragic Nature of Violence

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# Central Thesis

An education for resonance, for empathy, and awareness of the tragic nature of violence, which violates fundamental ethical principles, are all integral parts of a fully realised education for peacefulness.

They are the path and goal of education for peacefulness.

# Structure of the paper

- 1 Relationship ethics
- 2 Resonance
- 3 Empathy
- 4 Violence
- 5 Tragical nature of violence
- 6 Conclusion

# Relationship ethics

Relationship ethics is an account based on relationship philosophical anthropology, which places the understanding of humans as relationship beings at the centre. Contemporary relationship ethicists cultivate an interdisciplinary approach. Based on the research of human relationships, they develop realistic ethics.

Ethics of encounter and dialogical ethics.

Relational personalism, e. g. Martin Buber: a between (Ger. *das Zwischen*) as a foundation of all ethics.

Emmanuel Levinas: the relationship with the face of the other as a foundation of all ethics.

Hartmut Rosa's ethics of resonance.

Kerstin Krauss, *Ethik der Empathie* (2023).

I will highlight two relationships: resonance and empathy.

# Essential Components or Characteristics of Resonance (Hartmut Rosa)

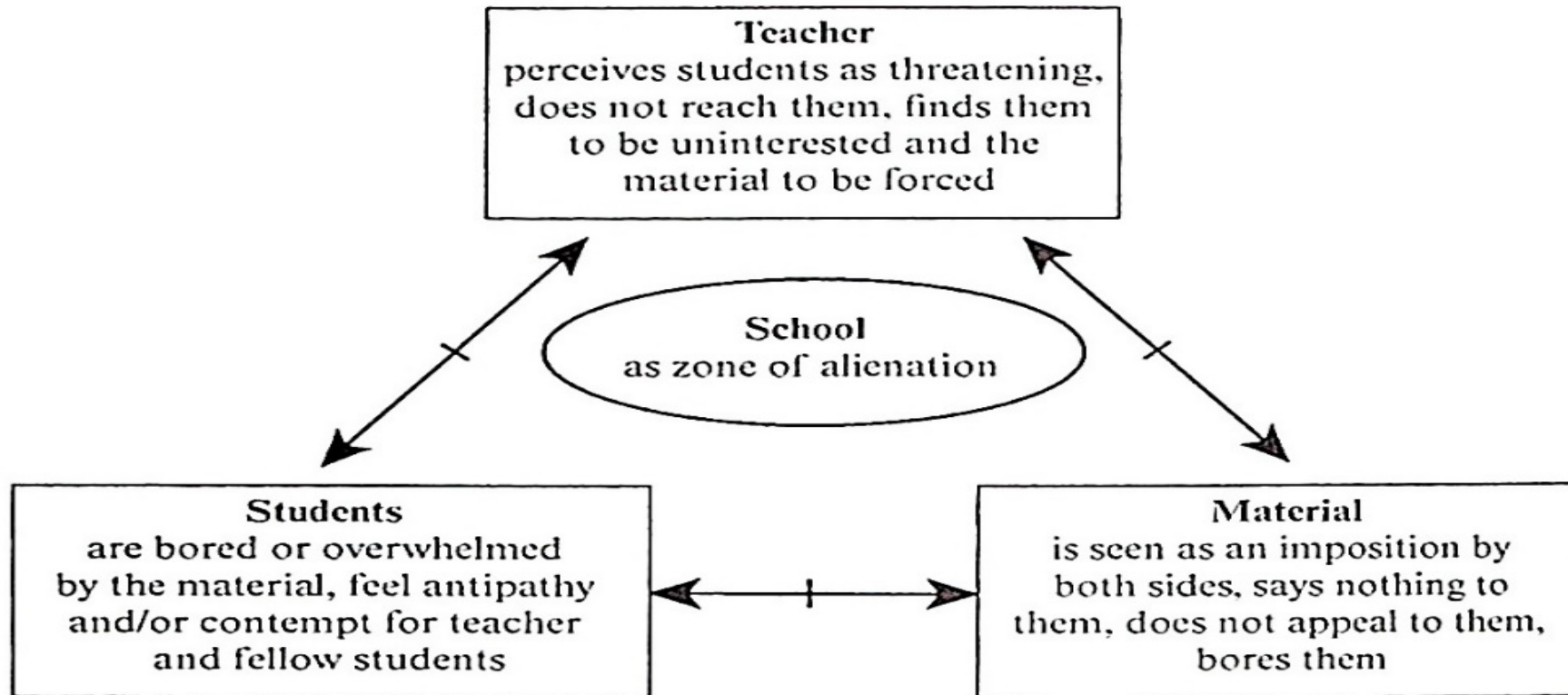
1. affection (Affizierung)
2. self-efficacy (Selbstwirksamkeit)
3. transformation (Transformation)
4. unavailability or uncontrollability (Unverfügbarkeit)

## Dimensions of resonance:

1. horizontal (politics, education)
2. vertical (art, religion, history, nature)
3. diagonal (inanimate entities, institutions)

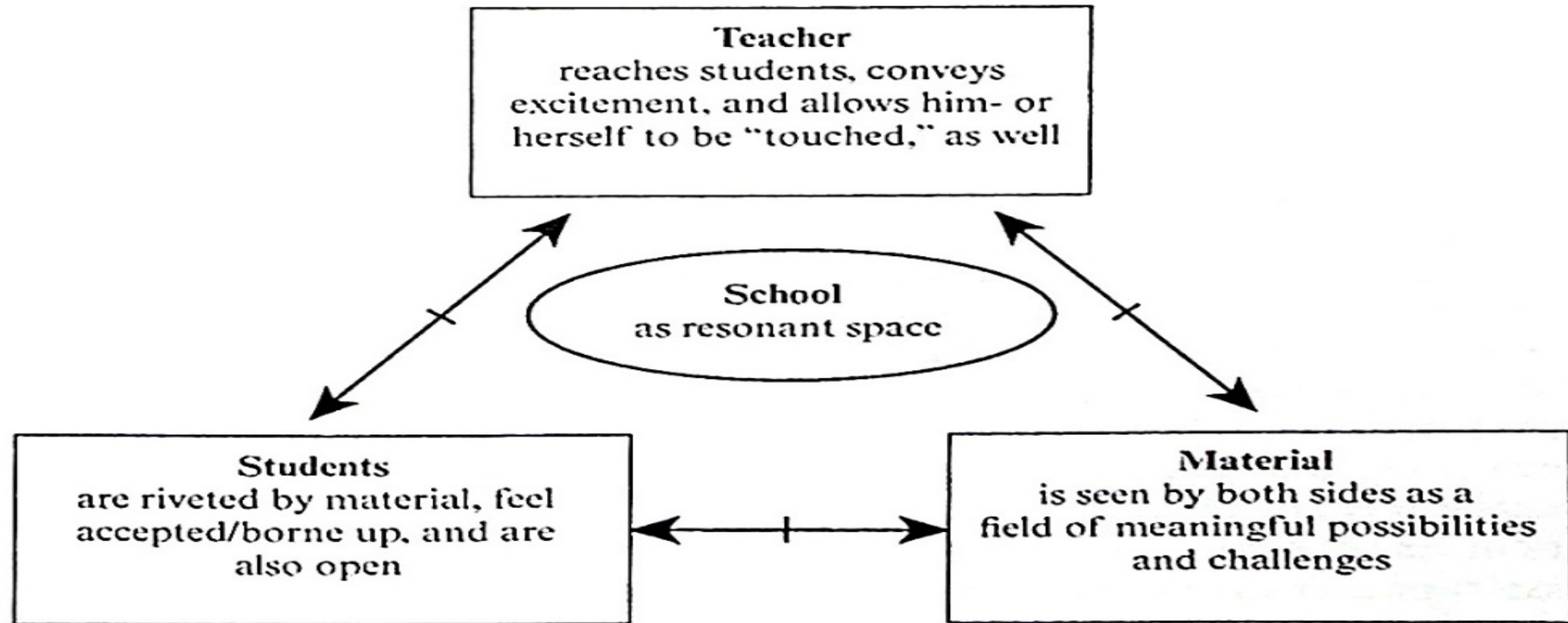
## Education and resonance (Hartmut Rosa, Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World 2019)

### The unsuccessful lesson as triangle of alienation



**Figure 5** The triangle of alienation. When a class or lesson becomes a struggle, nothing “comes across.” Fatigue and repulsion increase. Axes of resonance are blocked.

### The successful lesson as triangle of resonance



**Figure 6** The triangle of resonance. When the classroom “crackles” and no effort is needed to pay attention, axes of resonance begin to “vibrate.”



# The nature of empathy

Empathy is based on the “direct” experience of the experience of another and the physical presence of the body. In this regard, important questions about empathy and education online arise.

Empathy is the experience of the experience of the other. It has stages or phases (Edith Stein, Thomas Fuchs). Fully developed empathy is not an event, but a process with different stages.

The **phenomenological account of empathy** (PAE) understands empathy as a capacity that is based on the empathic person's body and on perceiving the physical aspects of the other's experience as parts of the expression of the other's experience. PAE denies the **principle of unobservability** accepted by proponents of the theory-theory account and simulation theory of empathy.

Empathy is a practically indispensable foundation of any actual ethics.

Without empathy, actual ethical relationships are practically impossible, since too many things that are essential for ethical attitudes and action are based on it (compassion, full interpersonal relationships, mutual understanding, encounter in the existentialist or personalist sense (Martin Buber's between, Ger. *das Zwischen*), dialogue, example taking, moral development, growth and education, etc.).

# Empathy and dialogue

Dialogue and violence are mutually exclusive. Violence is a negative factor in dialogue, while dialogue is a way to prevent and overcome violence. A culture of peace is a culture of dialogue and vice versa. Empathy is a condition for true dialogue.

## Conditions of dialogue:

1. equality;
2. empathy;
3. freedom;
4. openness to others, disclosure of assumptions and the "absence" of taboos.

Negative factors of dialogue: violence; fear; mistrust.

# Violence

Violence can be defined as a part of culture, not nature, which is reserved for relationships between people. Violence is different from the actions of animals, such as swallows eating mosquitoes or wolves attacking deer, which are not considered violent. It refers to any use of force or threat of force to compel others to act in a certain way, to prevent actions, or to cause harm for one's benefit or satisfaction.

We can distinguish between justified and unjustified violence. Similarly, some emphasise that not all coercion is violence. State institutions (police, courts, legislation), but also some others, use violence to prevent or punish behaviour that is considered criminal. The concrete distinction between justified and unjustified violence can be complicated and complex.



## Tragic nature of violence

- ▶ I'd like to emphasise the importance of awareness of the tragic nature of violence that violates fundamental ethical principles, such as the commandments “Do not lie!”, “Do not steal!”, “Do not kill!”, etc. I call these commandments ethical tautologies (Ludwig Wittgenstein) or principles of holiness. The tragedy of violating the principle of holiness lies in the fact that even if it is justified, even if we have no choice, it is always something bad. Our situation is tragic because we often have no other “ethical” option but to violate these principles and are “condemned” to their violations.

## Triumphalism of the victors and demonising the perpetrators

The ethics of the tragic nature of violating holiness is opposed both to any triumphalism of the victors and to demonising the perpetrators and imposing unjust retributive measures. Both have proven themselves time and again to be the origins of horrific violence and disrespect for the dignity of every human being. Therefore, developing awareness of the tragic nature of all violence violating the principles of holiness must be the purpose of education for peacefulness.

# Conclusion

Resonance, empathy, and awareness of the tragedy of any violation of the principles of holiness are in a relation of mutual interweaving, dependence, and reinforcement. Therefore, fully realised education for peacefulness includes all three as its means or method and goal. The lack of any of them significantly curtails education for peacefulness. At the same time, disrespect or even opposition to any of them distorts, disables, and in extreme cases even turns it into its opposite, despite formal or apparent commitment to peace and education for it.

Resonance, Empathy, Tragic Nature of  
Violence

Thank you very much for your  
attention!