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Rethinking the Heart:

Resonance Medicine As A Bridge Between Evidence And Experience

Part 2: Psychological, Social, Cultural and Transversal Resonance

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Summary

In the concept of resonance medicine, the heart is not only understood as a physiological organ, but also as a central resonance organ for emotional, social, cultural and spiritual processes. Psychological resonance manifests itself in the interplay of feelings, empathy and neuronal feedbacks and influences well-being and health. Social relationships, communal rhythms and ways of life also have an effect on the heart via resonant processes, while stress, isolation or digitization can affect it. Culture, language, art and rituals open up symbolic resonance spaces in which people experience meaning, orientation and connectedness. Spirituality also enables experiences of transpersonal resonance. A transversal depth layer connects these dimensions through dynamic feedback and self-organization processes of complex systems. In this perspective, the heart becomes an integrative mediator between body, psyche, the social world and meaning – and thus a central point of reference for an extended integrative medicine that not only seeks to heal, but to connect.

The heart is a resonance organ for feelings, relationships and meaning – emotional, social, cultural and spiritual resonance can influence our illness and recovery and thus opens up new perspectives for integrative medicine
Dierk Moyzes, MD

The first part of this article (published in zkm 6/25, [here on P2P](#) and [here on OIRF](#)) defines resonance as a fundamental regulatory principle and shows possible applications on a biological level from the perspective of integrative medicine. The current part broadens the perspective and shows how we can understand the concept of resonance beyond the purely physical and integrate everything that makes us deeply human. Central resonance dimensions are our thoughts and feelings, our coexistence on a small and large scale, and our culture and spirituality, which we express linguistically, artistically-visually, musically and ritually. What does it mean for our illness and recovery if we assume that we are all connected in a highly complex relationship structure and that vibrating resonance fields are interwoven in all dimensions of life, which can trigger change processes in a dynamic way?

Psychic Field

The psychic resonance of the heart unfolds in the dynamic interaction between inner emotional regulation and interbodily resonance, e.g. when we feel empathy. Feelings are not isolated, but rather "*comprehensive phenomena that connect self, body and world*" ^{[19][20]}. This reciprocal resonance is based on a subtle coordination of various internal feedback systems such as the autonomic nervous system – in particular through vagal self-regulation, as described in the context of polyvagal theory ^{[35][36]}, as well as on the activity of neuronal mirror systems, which form the basis of empathy and develop and enable resonance in the social space from an early age ^{[3][4]}. Neuroscientifically, the psychic resonance level is mediated by the insula, the premotor cortex (including the left hemispheric language centers ^[Broca] in right-handed people), the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), and the limbic system, especially the amygdala and hippocampus. These areas integrate emotional, interoceptive, verbal and social signals into a coherent emotional state, which is integrated by the interoceptive and self-networks, among others ^{[13][25][45][51]}.

The heart functions not only as a biological pump, but also as a sensory organ for relationship and as a place of feelings, of intuitive orientation and of affective wisdom.

Physically, this dimension is perceived as "consternation", warmth, breadth or narrowness of the heart ^[42] – qualities that often elude linguistic comprehension, but express themselves bodily in somatic marker sensations ^[15] and emotional attitudes. The heart functions not only as a biological pump, but also as a sensory organ for relationship and as a place of feelings, of intuitive orientation and of affective wisdom. In this perspective, we speak of heart intelligence, understood as an integrative ability to grasp emotional and relational information in a meaningful way and to translate it into coherent impulses for action ^[12].

The psychic field manifests itself artistically and creatively in music, dance or pictorial expressiveness, in which affects are symbolized and transformed. Music, dance and movement therapy as well as creative methods in psychotherapy and coaching use this dimension specifically to promote inner coherence and emotional integration. Resonance is not only created by cognitive processing, but also by the physically felt movement in expression. Fields of application range from mindfulness exercises, yoga, breathwork (vagal self-regulation) to coaching and psychotherapy. Psychological aspects also play a central role in integrative medicine.

Communication In Practice From a Resonance Medicine Perspective

- Think about all resonance fields: Open your anamnesis (e.g. chronobiology, psychosocial and cultural; in acute cases, catch up if necessary).
- Practitioner and patient are reciprocally connected in conversation – be aware that the condition of one influences the other.
- Short sequences (2-3 min) are sufficient to explore resonance fields.
- Examples of mini-intervention:
 - Specific questions about the psychosocial-cultural resonance field: "Are there people or situations where you feel calm and connected?"
 - Questions about personal history: "What interests you, what gives you meaning?"
 - Ask for metaphors: "If you had to describe your heart, what would come to mind spontaneously?"
- In the case of detailed patient answers, appreciative communication and attention management:
 - "Thank you very much for your description of your experience; this helps to understand the connections that play a role in your case."
 - "For an even better assessment, I would like to examine you medically/want to know more about..."
- Mindful conversation: Let your attention wander, pay attention to symptoms as well as implicit atmosphere, non-verbal signals (facial expressions, gestures, speech rhythm and sound) and resonance phenomena of your own body (e.g. tension, tightness, restlessness, heaviness).
- Include your own intuition, integrate associations: What does my gut feeling tell me, what impression is created?
- Documentation in the patient file, e.g. as a resonance note.

Social Field

The social resonance of the heart unfolds in the interplay between individual lifestyles and collectively shared realms of meaning, relationships and structures. Social resonance arises through synchronization, empathy and bodily-affective co-regulation in interpersonal and group dynamic processes. In bodily co-presence – for example in dance, in conversations or in making music together – resonance fields close to the body arise in the form of rhythmically timed fields of mutual attunement, which are conveyed by neural coupling ^{[48][52]}, introjection of mental images and emotional tuning in ^{[27][37]}. These processes are fundamental to trust, belonging, and collective coherence.

The lifestyle in the areas of work, exercise, nutrition and sleep has a significant influence on social resonance. Chronic stress, lack of exercise or social withdrawal impair vagal regulation and interbodily openness. Conversely, rhythmic everyday structures, shared meals, mindful movement practice and sufficient regeneration promote social connectivity as well as heart coherence at the systemic level.

Resonance also unfolds in culturally anchored forms of togetherness – for example, in ritual practices, language, narratives, artistic expression or symbolic systems of order. These collective "resonance media" ^[38] enable transgenerational affect processing, belonging, and value orientation. At the same time, socio-cultural resonance relations are always configured by structural conditions (economic differences, working conditions, political institutions and digital technologies). Resonance can erode where people feel alienated, overwhelmed or devalued – for example through precariousness, isolation or algorithmically controlled communication.

The intensive use of digital products especially endangers the resonance ability, or its development and cultivation, in particular in childhood ^[5].

On this level, the heart is not only to be understood biologically or emotionally, but also as a socially resonant organ that stabilizes itself through proximity, trust and shared rhythms – and can be destabilized by estrangement, acceleration or competition. In this sense, heart health is not only individual, but also socially and politically shaped.

The fields of application of resonance medicine range from group therapy, systemic therapy, couple and family work to preventive lifestyle interventions.

Cultural Field

Culture – like nature – is an essential contextual factor that strongly influences health ^[44]: "*To live culturally signifies to be meaningful and in resonance with the inner and the outer**." The cultural field generally describes the characteristic of the person to establish resonance with the world

through language, symbols and contexts. The philosopher *Ernst Cassirer* wrote in 1944 in his late work "*An Essay on Man*" ^[11]: "Only man [is] able to give meaning to the world: The symbol becomes the perfect example of the configuration of reality. Man lives in a symbolic universe that he himself has created." According to this, man permanently interprets himself and his shared world through symbolic attributions of meaning and establishes his own reality. This distinguishes him from all other natural beings. Cassirer therefore referred to humans as "*animal symbolicum*" ^{[11][24]}. Cassirer distinguishes between the cultural areas of language, art, myth/religion and science.

Coherence develops on a cultural level, for example, through semantic matching, by way of consistent narratives, images, metaphors and ethical models of order. In this dimension, the heart appears as a resonant organ of understanding that grasps symbolic meanings not only intellectually, but physically, existentially, and meaningfully – a dimension that *Viktor Frankl* ^[18] describes as the "noetic" layer of being human. In contrast to the objectifiable perspective of empirically oriented cardiac medicine, the focus is on the human being as a subject, i.e. as a singular resonance being. The philosopher *Windelband* was the first to introduce the terms "nomothetic" and "idiographic" to the normative distinction between natural sciences and humanities (Strasbourg Rectorate Speech ^[56]). Nomothetic cardiac medicine directs the focus upon the regular patterns, typologies, or structures of illness and healing, while the idiographic aims the focus on the existential, social, and symbolic experience. Following Cassirer's subdivision, the idiographic aspects of heart symbolism in the areas of language, art and myth/religion are touched upon (this text implicitly shows what nomothetic science can be, the methodological basis is the "*Anthropological Method*" by *Peter Hahn* ^[23]).

Neurocognitively, the noetic idiographic level corresponds with semantic networks, the medial prefrontal cortex, the right hemisphere, and the default mode network – thus those brain regions that integrate autobiographical reflection, imagination, and ethical-moral evaluation. The bodily-symbolic understanding with the heart is often experienced as an "aha experience", inner relief or deep agreement – a form of understanding that is not analytical, but rather resonant and often poetically conveyed.

Language: Historical Heart Symbols

Myths, fairy tales and poetry open up symbolic resonance spaces in which the heart responds to archetypal images and narrative structures. Such narratives not only touch the mind, but also activate emotional and bodily resonances that deepen the sense of meaning and belonging ^[10]. Fairy tales, for example, work through recurring motifs and archetypal figures that appeal to unconscious layers of experience and thereby enable mental transformation ^[8]. Poetry unfolds a special power of the heart through rhythm, sound and metaphor that amplify affective resonances and evoke inner images ^{[26][34]}. In this way, myths, fairy tales and poetic language link individual feelings with collective symbols and make the heart a medium of cultural meaning and resonance.

* Translator note: "with the inner" – one's own world of thoughts and feelings (self-image and psyche) – and "with the outer" – the actual environment (social environment and physical world).

Fig. 2 [showed an image of a metal singing bowl] Vibration is felt when sound gently synchronizes the heart coherence.

The historical view makes it clear that the heart has been understood both as a biological organ and as a cultural symbol for several millennia ^{[26][34][41]}. In addition to the early medical knowledge of its function in the bloodstream (Ancient Egypt, China, Hippocrates), the heart is a central symbol of ethical thinking, conscience and wisdom in many cultures. The phrase "thinking with the heart" refers to an integrative form of knowledge that combines feeling, intuition and understanding of meaning – beyond purely rational logic.

From a cultural-historical perspective, the heart can be understood as a multidimensional symbol that takes on a role as an emotional, intuitive, and social organ of orientation beyond its physiological function ^{[26][34]}. It acts as an intrapersonal compass, as a perceptual space for self-references and references to others, as well as a resonance field in which individual and collective experiences are interwoven.

This opens up spaces for philosophical, ethical and spiritual self-assurance, for orientation in complex life questions and for inner dialogue with values and meaning. The heart here functions as a symbol of judgment, integrity and compassionate reason – an authority that mediates between knowledge, wisdom and responsibility. Fields of application range from one's own reading and writing, cultural participation in readings or performances through logotherapy and existential counselling, fairy tale and poetry therapy, philosophical practice and ethical reflection in the sense of cultural medicine ^{[43][44]} and to educational work on world views, values and meaning.

Art

In the cultural dimension of heart resonance, art plays a central role as a medium of symbolization and communal experience ^{[6][16][53]}. Works of art can be understood as resonance spaces in which the heart reacts to aesthetic forms, sounds and images. Neuroscientific studies show that aesthetic experiences trigger not only cognitive, but also physiological-affective processes that are closely linked to heart rhythm and emotional regulation ^{[28][47]}. Music in particular is considered a resonance carrier, because it influences heart rate variability and emotional coherence ^{[49][50]}. In addition, art enables the expression of collective meanings by linking individual sensations to cultural symbols, thereby creating a common resonance field ^[31]. In this way, the heart can be experienced not only as a biological organ, but also as a cultural-symbolic center that finds its deepest forms of expression in art. Forms of application range from one's own artistic or musical activities and projects through to coaching and also to art, music and dance therapy.

Spirituality

The spiritual level of the heart refers to the deep-rooted human practice of building a resonance with the transpersonal through culturally embedded rituals. Rituals – whether religious, spiritual, shamanic or everyday – create a condensed field of shared experience through rhythm, repetition, symbolic actions and collective presence. In this field, people can come into contact with a reality that reaches beyond the personal self. Awareness of the high relevance of spirituality in psychology and medicine is increasing ^{[7][9][29][39][54]}.

Neurobiologically, ritual states can be associated with changes in EEG rhythms (e.g., theta and alpha waves), affective control circuits (especially via the limbic system), and neuromodulatory processes (e.g., oxytocin, endorphins) ^[9]. These physiological changes correlate with trance, ecstasy, resonance fields of connectedness, and states of self-transcendence.

The heart appears in this dimension as a gateway to the soul, as a center of inner alignment, spiritual presence and intuitive knowledge. In many indigenous and religious traditions, the heart is considered a place of the fire of life, the life force (Qi, Prana, Ruach) or the courage of the heart – that inner energy that makes it possible to go through existential transitions, suffering or transformation with dignity and devotion. The heart here is not only an organ, but also a sacred place, an inner sanctuary of the connection between the I, the Thou and the greater whole ^[34].

Spiritual resonance manifests itself physically as emotion, goosebumps, tears, expansion of the heart or silence. These experiences go beyond individual emotions and touch the transpersonal field – a supra-individual dimension of connectedness, presence and inner truth. Access to this dimension is often opened through rituals in transitional phases (birth, initiation, death), through singing, prayer, breathwork or ecstatic practices. Fields of application range from rituals in mourning, transition and healing processes, spiritual practice, church commitment to transpersonal psychotherapy, shamanic rituals as well as mindfulness and breathing practices with a ritual character.

Transversal Deep Layer

This dimension is to be understood less as a "level" in the classical sense, but rather as a connecting deep layer that underlies all other resonance levels and connects them with each other. It describes the resonant interplay of complex living systems based on information processing, coherence dynamics and self-organization, transversally penetrating biological, psychological, social and spiritual fields.

Resonance on this level is manifested in open feedback processes (e.g., autopoiesis ^[33]), in meaning coherence ^{[1][2]}, and in a form of self-reference and group reference, as can be experienced, for example, in mindfulness practices or systemic structural constellations (here in

the form of representational perceptions) ^[14]. "Presencing" leads precisely into this resonance through the opening of mind, heart and will ^[40] and is also referred to as relational systems thinking ^[21]. This "relational" resonance is physically perceptible as a feeling of inner coherence, intuitive alignment, sometimes as an atmospheric quality of the "intended context" – beyond cognitive analysis, but clearly as a resonance phenomenon in the subject's field of sense.

Neurobiologically, this dimension is linked to the integration of several neuronal networks, in particular:

- Prefrontal cortex (self-regulation, symbolic processing)
- Default Mode Network (autobiographical coherence, imagination)
- Salience network (context sensitivity, meaning assignment)
- Self-Network (bodily-emotional location)
- Insula (interoceptive sensing, self-world relation)

Quantum physical analogies can be used to conceptually expand this dimension, but not in the sense of speculative esotericism, but rather as structurally related models of thought ^{[17][22][32][46]}:

- Entanglement: Quantum objects remain connected to each other over distance, which serves as a metaphor for nonlinear synchronous coupling in communicative or biological systems (e.g., heart-brain resonance, bonding experiences).
- Superposition: The simultaneous existence of several states of possibility is reflected in the ambivalence of human construction of meaning – in the limbo of decision, imagination and emergent understanding.
- Quantum field dynamics: In the micro scale, there exist fluctuating coherent fields that can be interpreted as process spaces of creative potentiality – comparable to the open possibilities of systemic development.

These analogies can be understood as resonance-theoretical bridging models: they point to the processual, context-dependent and emergent nature of living systems, in which the heart – metaphorically as well as biologically – remains a sensitive coupling organ: a mediator of coherence.

The informational-systemic deep layer is a scientific desideratum that is increasingly being researched in an interdisciplinary manner – at the interface of systems theory, neurophilosophy, information ecology and consciousness research. It has the potential to integrate the hitherto fragmented approaches to the world – in a field of meaning that remains both complexity-conscious and existentially tangible. Fields of application are, for example, awareness and mindfulness practices, solution-focused and systemic therapy, salutogenetic health models or complexity-conscious counselling and leadership.

Discussion

The presented resonance model integrates insights from neuroscience, psychology, sociology, ecology and cultural studies into a coherent framework of extended medicine. Resonance does not function as a mechanistic factor, but rather as a regulative and multidimensional relationship principle that brings biological, psychological, social and cultural processes into context.

This model allows:

- A clear distinction from non-critical energy or vibration models without empirical foundation,
- Scientific connectivity through the integration of established concepts such as heart rate variability, neurobiological mirroring networks, embodiment, salutogenesis and neuroplasticity,
- A methodological opening for subjective, physically based, interpersonal and cultural dimensions of experience.

It also provides a practical framework for the development of interdisciplinary interventions – from music therapy to mindfulness-based procedures to ecologically and ritually embedded settings. As a result, medical practice is not only expanded, but also rehumanized by taking the experience, feeling and living environment of the patients seriously.

Conclusion And Vision

Modern resonance medicine does not need speculative assumptions about field effects or frequencies. It understands resonance as a systemic-dynamic principle that can be experienced, described and partly measurable on all levels of human existence. The model presented here understands recovery not as a linear process, but rather as the restoration of coherence through resonance – physically tangible, neurobiologically anchored, culturally embedded, ecologically connected and existentially meaningful.

It provides a conceptual basis for a new integrative medicine that:

- Does not reduce the human being to symptoms, but understands it as a physical-social resonance being,
- Considers scientific evidence and subjective experience equally,
- Enables new forms of therapeutic relationship, environmental design and health education.

Future-proof medicine will have to be measured by whether it not only repairs, but also connects – body with mind, individual with world, science with experience, clinic with culture. Resonance medicine in the sense outlined here is not an alternative to conventional medicine, but rather its necessary extension in the direction of an integrated anthropology of recovery and healing.

Conflict of interest: The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Literature

For zkm subscribers the literature can be found at: DOI: 10.1055/a-2814-8151.



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