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# The Immersive Experience of Trail Running: A Philosophical Investigation Here and Now in motion

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*Abstract: This paper examines the connection between endurance athletes, their bodies, the world, and the present through the lens of trail running, a competitive race in which athletes cover distances longer than a marathon. The study draws on Platonic texts, Rosa's theory of resonance, and Hadot's concept of oceanic feeling to understand how running helps athletes connect with the landscape, their bodies, and the present. According to Platonic writings, running immerses athletes in a state of active presence, while Hadot argues that running provokes feelings of wonder and apprehension that he calls "oceanic feelings," which connect athletes to their bodies and the world. Rosa's theory of resonance posits that consonance between the athlete and the surrounding landscape helps establish a connection between the athlete, their body, and the world.*

*Keywords: Trail Running, Ultra Endurance, Philosophy, Resonance, Oceanic Feeling*

## Introduction

Based on the observation of the current popularity of trail running events, the paper discusses the ability of running to provide existential responses from the body itself, allowing one to connect with oneself and the world. In this sense, against the spiral of acceleration, increasing speed would paradoxically allow to experience the present time, and to be connected to the world - alive. The fears of an empty world, the loss of landmarks in the professional and social spheres feed the need felt by a growing number of people to seek new ways of feeling and experiencing the world. The intense sporting experience of ultra-trail running engages modifications in the relationship of time and space. Spatial-temporal stretching modifies the athlete's intimate perceptions during the effort. What if running, faster, longer finally offered the conditions for a presence here and now? The article examines the capacity of immersive outdoor practices of trail running to produce connection and engage athletes in a certain inner vibration and bring forth "something like a string starts to vibrate" (Rosa 2018, 15).

Trail running reflects the tension between the promise of resonance and existential utopia. Does trail running offer a way of transformation and access to another type of being-in-the-world based on resonance relationships? The trail running events highlight the physical commitment in the natural environment. This greening of the practice of sports is a real success, as shown by the growing number of events. These immersive activities would increase the senses and underline in passing how much the body embodies both the "support of meaning (kinesthetic vehicle)" and also underpins the production "of meaning in the existence of modern man - hurried, connected (Rosa 2010)" (Plard 2016).

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Sensory immersions consist of "immersing one's living body in experiences that internalize, in the sense of delineating the extremities, edges, and orifices of one's inner body, body schema, body image, and sensibility through vertigo, osmosis, or ecstasy" (Andrieu 2014, 284).

Trail running or endurance running encapsulates competitive races over distances that are usually longer than marathons. Unlike the 26-mile marathons, endurance running cover distances that range anywhere from 31 miles to 186 miles (Simpson and al. 2014; Rochat and al. 2018). As the athletes run, they pass through different types of challenging meteorological and environmental conditions, including deserts, rain, snow, jungles, mountains, and forests (Simpson and al. 2014). Though many studies have evaluated the experiences of endurance runners through the treacherous terrain, very few have done it from the philosophical perspective. Ancient philosophical texts can offer insight into these experiences. Pierre Hadot and Rosa Hartmut are among the most renowned interpreters of ancient philosophy. Their interpretation of ancient philosophy, the views they espouse about it, and the research styles they employ disclose their belief that ancient philosophy is as relevant to late modern society as it was in Ancient Greek. Rather than viewing ancient philosophy as an abstract construct, Hadot and Rosa regard it as an activity that has significant value to modernity. This attitude is apparent in Hadot and Rosa's integration of mysticism and the spiritual realm in the assessment of people's relationship with the physical world. Through the concept of oceanic feeling, Hadot argues that people's connection to the world generates a sense of wonder that leads them to perceive the world in a new light (Laugier 2011). Likewise, Rosa, through the theory of resonance, claims that all subjects will, in their lifetimes, encounter constitutive resonance experiences that reveal the consonance between the world and the self (Christoffersen and Gregersen 2019). Based on Platonic texts, Rosa's theory of resonance, and Hadot's oceanic feeling, this text will suggest that running connects endurance athletes to their body, the world, and the present.

### ***Method and data***

A corpus of running narratives will illustrate the propositions of philosophical analysis. It is composed of nine narratives of race written by Mathieu Blanchard<sup>2</sup> and published on his personal website. Individual interviews were also conducted in 2018, 2019 and 2020 with the athlete. He shares on this space his personal experiences through stories, photos and videos. His biography specifies from the start the special relationship he has with nature: "Running in the wilderness and scuba diving forge my philosophy of life, offer me a way to reconnect with myself and explore the world. Thus, I can confront danger, my fears, but above all the letting go, the acceptance of physiological, psychological and climatic constraints to finally connect to this universe that is the bottom of the sea to the top of the mountains. The choice of feeding this theoretical reflection with stories of races allows the proposals to be anchored in the intimate experiences, in the anchors lived by the athlete. Mathieu's stories were chosen for several reasons. The first is essential and ethical: the athlete's agreement to use his texts and his availability to discuss the theoretical ideas developed. The second is his posture and his commitment to practice. He evokes his practice with hindsight and offers a narrative of himself, of his experiences on several levels: both bodily and intimate, he also mentions the consequences of these feelings on other social, family, spiritual spheres, etc. In fact, the stories are not representative, but serve to illustrate and question the modes of relationship that trail running brings to light. Also, the nine race stories serve to develop the article by stating how the practice embodies both a philosophy of life and a way of exploring relationships between oneself and the world.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mathieu-blanchard.com/> Accessed December 1, 2022.

The events for which stories are published are listed in the Annex. The titles of the posts remain those of the author, and give details of the distances, the nature of the event in terms of distance and altitude difference ("translation" by the author). When quotes are used in the article, they are referenced by the mention [MB].

To qualify and structure the lexical field, central themes were first identified. The richness of certain fields was then explored. Queries in the verbatim reports made it possible to understand the significance of lexical fields related to: sport, effort, nature, contemplation, and wonder. The setting up of a thematic tree specific to the ultra-trail. In addition, in order to put into perspective these data from the trails and the athlete's body, a corpus of data was created to identify the dimensions of Rosa's resonance and to translate these arguments into the universe of outdoor running.

### **Result: Finding Presence Through Movement**

To commit oneself to an ultra-race is above all to set oneself in motion towards other possibilities! To think that it is physically possible to run more than 100 kilometers represents, even before the start, a surpassing, surpassing of a framework of thought to let emerge in oneself the belief that everything is possible, that it is enough to activate the world, that the relationship between oneself and the world can be shaped. "Nothing is set in stone" Mathieu announces: "even if certain apparently fixed models exist by postulate and even if experience can reassure us in our actions" [MB], the prospect of running over long distances activates the belief systems.

The body can be energized to become a sphere of inner resonance by awakening the senses and defining a new sensorial cartography. "An analysis of the different ways in which people relate to the world, experience and perceive it, act in it and orient themselves in it, must necessarily begin with the body. The most obvious and basic answer to the question how are we placed in the world? is: on our feet" (Rosa 2018, 57). Our being-in-the-world and our being-in-the-world proceeds from the anchoring capacity that the feet provide. Rosa speaks of an ontological certainty in this regard. Running on the trail sets this ontological certainty in motion. The race - the acceleration of the body - destabilizes this assurance and awakens the sensations of links between the ground and the feet to better experience it.

The endurance runners' movement has the potential to connect them to the present. Through movement, endurance athletes can immerse themselves in a state of active presence. The runners' immersion into the state of active presence is vital to their ability to overcome muscular damage, fatigue, pain, and extreme exhaustion amid their pursuit of personal discovery and development (Rochat and al. 2018). Movement is central to the ancient ideal of living in the present. According to Platonic texts, movement, like the truth, resides in present consciousness and cannot exist in any other form (Kisiel 2005). The texts suggest that the traditional perspective on movement encompasses the basic attitude of living in the present. In this regard, living in the present means being present in the 'right here' (ibid). It implies that one must remain grounded in the here and now—in the suffering, the breathing, the sweating, and the recovering. Consistent with this, trail running would entail being in a state of active presence, in which the endurance athlete engages in a constant exchange with 'Being'. This exchange would occur through the intense focus on the here and now. As the athlete runs and endures pain and exhaustion, his intense concentration on the here and now discloses the symbolic meaning that resides in his movement, breathing, suffering, and sweating (Kisiel 2005). Such exchange and single-mindedness is only possible when the individual's mind is

immersed in the movement. It becomes difficult burdened when the athlete is struggling with negative thoughts and distractive opinions (ibid). To achieve this state of immersion in the present situation of what is, trail runners must free themselves from fixed mental conditioning patterns by 'letting be' and embracing what Platonic texts refer to as primal action (Urhandlung) (Kisiel 2005). Their embrace of primal action will lead them to live in the present by setting the stage for their immersion in active presence.

Even with the recognition and embrace of primal action, endurance athletes' connection to the present is heavily dependent on their ability to achieve the state of "Being". "Being" is a state in which the endurance athlete frees himself from the constraints of time and space and achieves absolute immutability (Bonney 1992). It is only in this state of true being that the athlete can achieve true discourse and knowledge (ibid). Given the prominence of the concept of 'Being' in general Platonic philosophy, there is a need to investigate its usefulness to a comprehensive understanding of trail runners' quest to live in the present. Towards this end, a brief inquiry into the nature of 'Being' in Plato dialogues like the Republic, the Sophist, and the Parmenides would offer an insight into the concept and how it relates to the immersive experience of trail running. Platonic texts suggest that 'Being' consists of the "same" and "otherness" (Tress 1999). In its stable and perfect form, the "same" and "otherness" have a perfect and complete character (ibid). The publications also suggest that 'Being' has a form that is intelligible (ibid). Its features are markedly different from the material and generated world. In this state, 'Being' is free from the constraints of time and space. Therefore, it can be present and be intimate with what is other than it (ibid). It can exist anywhere and everywhere because spatial specifications related to "where" do not limit it. These arguments suggest that endurance athletes' will realize true being when they actively seek out the intelligible forms closely connected to their interaction with the landscapes in which they are running. The resultant connection will immerse the athlete in a world of living in the presence and shift his mind and spirit to a geographical location far away from the endurance athlete's trail.

This exposition underscores the need to distinguish between 'Being' and the physical development milestones of the endurance athlete. The definition of 'Being' suggests that the form that it takes differs from that the material features that comprise the trail runner's short-term and long-term objectives (Tress 1999). The athletes must recognize this difference for them to attain the structure and completeness that characterizes 'Being'. At the same time, the endurance runner must recognize that the implication of this distinction stretches beyond an understanding of the characteristics. Once the athlete comprehends the distinction, he understands its full significance. In this regard, the athlete will understand the radical separation of 'Being' from the fitness and other personal growth milestones he is trying to achieve with each movement. However, the high degree of divergence between 'Being' and the endurance athlete's material milestones differ does not necessitate the integration of correlation as a third element. Though "Being" and the material milestones are independent constructs, they are already relatable. The material objectives and 'Being' can coexist from the start.

### ***Ultra-Endurance Trail Running from Pierre Hadot's Perspective***

A phenomenological reading of the experience is elaborated by Mathieu's testimonies. They allow us to identify a particular sensory cartography, a kinesthetic dimension specific to the trail, in direct connection with the environment. The being-in-the-world of the trail runner is defined by points of attentiveness and contact characterized by a great receptivity: being completely aware of one's breath (Bergson élan vital), tactile sensation (the skin), one's heartbeat, perception of one's own limits, of one's power to be.

From the standpoint of the ultra-endurance athlete, movement ushers the sentiment of the sacred or the sense of the holy into the present world. It is a manifestation of a state that, in the opinion of Pierre Hadot (1922-2010), encompasses the display of modern sensibility. The pervasiveness of this experience of expressing modern sensibility is apparent in an interview in which Hadot recounted two profound experiences—one inside a room and the other beneath a star-filled sky. In the interview, Hadot recalled how the two experiences triggered within him a form of apprehension that was terrifying and fulfilling in equal measure (Yiassemides 2017). According to Hadot, the experiences arose in the immediate aftermath of his recognition of his presence in the world and of his existence in that world (ibid). Hadot notes that he was unable to explain his experience of presence in the whole (ibid). However, everything became clear when he realized that the nexus between questions like “Why am I here?” “What is this world I am in?” and “What am I?” and his experience of the world and his presence within it (ibid). It was only after this realization that Hadot experience the feelings of wonder, astonishment, and strangeness at the thought of being present in the world. Taken as a whole, these claims suggest that the endurance athlete connects to the present and his body when he ventures into a reflection about his purpose. Through these inquiries, the athlete develops a sense of wonder, astonishment, and strangeness that reveals his deep connection to the world that surrounds him.

Yet the endurance athletes’ awareness of their existence or being-in-the-world is a complex process that culminates with the development of the ‘oceanic sentiment’.

The body on the starting line. On the starting line, ready to be lived, challenged by the soil, the distance, the altitude differences. The body will be used to monitor the world, it is a matter of being aware of it so as not to miss any information. A change in temperature, an emerging pain in the right knee, dehydration, a subtle knowledge of the body is necessary to be able to cover so many kilometers. For Mathieu, "body expression represents a true philosophy of life and a way to reconnect with his deep nature", he "confronts his fears, but above all the letting go, the acceptance of physiological and climatic constraints to finally connect and adapt to this other universe that is the bottom of the sea or the top of the mountains. Breathing control, stress management, introspection, he explores here his physical and mental sensations in the great wilderness.

As the ultra-endurance athletes run, their inquiries into the purpose they are fulfilling in the world lead them to become conscious of the world, their presence in the whole, and their unique role within it. Hadot revealed this perspective in his explanation of the essence of living in the present. Hadot noted that, as he sat beneath the sky-filled stars, questions related to his purpose in the world fostered, within him, the feeling of immersion in the world (Yiassemides 2017). Sentiments about being present in and part of a world that extended from the tiniest blades of grass to the stars above clouded his mind (ibid). Hadot added that the world became immensely present to him (ibid). Long after the experience, Hadot would learn that the awareness of being part of the whole is the ocean sentiment (Ibid). Likewise, the ultra-endurance will notice the natural locations in which they are running and go out of their way to understand the symbolic significance of the surrounding environment. Through these inquiries, trail runners develop an awareness of the existence and become aware of their immersion in an environment that extends from the trail in which they are running to the cool air in the atmosphere that surrounds them.

In running, reality is appreciated, not facilitated, not even necessarily accessible, but simply accepted. The responsiveness and openness of the relationship between the body and the world allows wonder, euphoria, elation and enthusiasm to emerge through distance and testing. These inner expressions are only pure joy, in motion, joy in action, the joy of the body in nature - and therefore, according to Spinoza, an experience of the joy of God. "Amazed by the landscapes, my eyes and heart were filled with them" [MB3].

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The inquiries will also disclose the significance of the forests, vegetation, and other physical features that surround the ultra-endurance runner's trail. Specifically, they will reveal their symbolic significance. To comprehend the symbolic importance of physical features, one must turn to the work of German sociologist, Theodor Adorno (1903-1969). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno published an elaborate critique of modernity (Yiassemides, 2017). In his critical assessment of modernity, Adorno noted that myth and Enlightenment or mythology and science were not opposites (ibid). According to Adorno, the two constructs are diametrically interconnected, with each giving rise to the other (ibid). At a significant juncture in his argument, Adorno notes that the act of remembering nature in the subject is one of the central components of Enlightenment's opposition to tyranny (ibid). Adorno asserts that Enlightenment opposes domination in the way in which its remembrance of nature in the subject encompasses a fulfillment of an unacknowledged truth about all forms of human culture (ibid). These assertions disclose the presence of an inner nature at the core of human beings' psychic structure. Mathieu highlights the importance of immersion in the natural environment and its initiatory character. Knowledge emerges from the practice of trail running since it allows him to "put his intimate experience in perspective with the natural world". Running allows one to observe "environmental balances, animal behaviors, plant interactions, the human way of life at the origins of time... We learn a lot! [MB].

Hadot's sentiments suggest that the sense of wonder towards the surrounding landscapes is one of the most fundamental aspects of the endurance athletes' connection to his body, the world, and the present (Laugier 2011). This worldview (which Hadot refers to as the oceanic feeling in some of his texts) leads the athlete into the state that existentialists refer to as learning to view the world from the new perspective (ibid). In the course of observing the world in a new light, the athlete does not discover its absurdity and develops a sense of nausea as existentialists would conclude. Rather, the athlete's connection to the world transforms into a fascination with the new meanings discovered in the surrounding world. Indeed, Hadot acknowledges this when he disagrees with existentialists' conclusions regarding the effects of people's discovery of the new world. Hadot differs with existentialists' claim that seeing the world in a new light leads to a realization of its absurdity and the development of a nauseating feeling (Hadot 2009). Hadot rejects this conclusion and notes that seeing the surrounding landscape in a new perspective fosters a sense of wonder (ibid). Instead of developing the nauseating feeling, the individual develops a sense of wonder at the existence of the world (ibid). The athletes' discovery of the new world breeds a sense of wonder that sets the stage for their increased fascination with the surrounding world. Therefore, the sense of wonder becomes the primary source of the feelings or sentiments that lead the trail runner to transform running into an immersive experience that connects people to their body, the world, and the present.

These environments provide a powerful and vibrant spiritual force for living beings. Connecting and interacting through scuba diving and running in nature is a philosophy of life. A way to reconnect with our deepest nature" [MB].

### *Hartmut Rosa's Theory of Resonance*

Besides the Platonic texts and Pierre Hadot's oceanic feeling, Rosa's theory of resonance can offer insight into how running connects endurance athletes to their bodies, the world, and the present. Rosa's resonance theory provides a critical evaluation of modernity as punctuated by the continuous quest for acceleration. Through this theory, Rosa continues the tradition of tackling the problematic characteristics of modern societies. This is a tradition that began with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. To Rosa, the problematic aspects of modernity are its insatiable demand for continuous improvement. This is manifested in the widespread belief that

society is modern when it uses continuous improvement as a strategy for maintaining the stability of its institutions. Rosa notes that this feature of the late modern society fosters inaccurate interpretation of spatial and temporal experiences. From the temporal standpoint, it leads society to categorize acceleration as a temporal and spatial experience. In the quest to achieve acceleration people become breathless and depressed. Spatially, it leads people to associate modern life with aggression. As a result, people begin to erroneously attribute expansion and conquest to the wider and spiritual aspects of their connection to the world and the present.

Rosa dismisses this late modern perspective in his assertion that resonance with the surrounding environment is central to fruitful life experiences. Through the theory of resonance, Rosa posits that all subjects, throughout their lifetime, will encounter constitutive resonance experiences. As a result, human beings' conduct of life owes its existence to the search in the constitutive repositories of resonance and the complementary journey of avoiding repetition of alienating experiences. Rosa draws the concept of resonance from physics. In physics, resonance is a metaphor that has musical and emotional connotations. Despite this, Rosa insists that resonance has a meaning that extends beyond the one musical and emotional realms of physics. According to Rosa, resonance is the specific connection that encapsulates the mutuality of human beings' ability to touch, reach, and move the surrounding world and the mutuality of being touched, reached, and moved by the surrounding environment. However, it does not encompass the individual's ability to control lifeforms in the immediate environment. Based on the outlined definition, vibrators cannot utilize violence to generate resonance. Resonance will only develop when the frequency of the vibrator matches that of the surrounding system. In the context of social reality, resonance relationships will only take root when a consonance between the world and the self emerges and sets the stage for an interaction with a different other. This emergence and interaction create a relationship of mutual influence.

For Mathieu, it seems crucial to emphasize the creative power of the practice on the way of being with others, his friends, his family. He says he is "very sensitive to the ultra-beneficial impacts that physical activity and connection with nature can have on the preservation of the environment, but also on our health, our quality of life, our fulfillment, our body, our mind, our social, family and professional life" [MB].

## **Discussion: Exploring the Intersection of Running, the Body, and the World: A Theoretical Discussion**

Trail running creates special relationships between runners, a community of effort and understanding. "About 4 hours of very demanding trails will be run with this great athlete Florent Bouguin. My companion advocates life values that make me think. Despite a personal project that kept him away from the trails for a few months, he is here, back in his quest for meaning. His mind and his experience form solid foundations in his life balance. The silence replaces our discussion of *coureurs des bois*, I ask myself questions. Do I have a harmonious life balance? Constantly jostled between work, family, personal, social, health, leisure baskets... where to allocate my eggs? It's hard to find the time to take a break and analyze" [MB]. The race allows this time for oneself.

Though a detailed socio-philosophical account of the theory is vital to a comprehensive understanding, the theory of resonance is rooted in a straightforward perspective. According to the theory, resonance is the basic structure or framework that connects human beings to the environment that surrounds them. The theory posits that a two-way linkage manifests between the world and the self (Christoffersen and Gregersen 2019). Proponents of the theory

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symbolically explain that relationship through the divergent “af ◀ fect and e ▶ motion” movement (ibid). Indeed, this understanding of the relationship becomes apparent in Rosa’s definition of resonance (ibid). According to Rosa, resonance encompasses a unique bodily, affective, and cognitive relationship between the individual and the world (ibid). In this relationship, segments of the world repeatedly touch and shake subjects down to neutral positions. At the same time, subjects remain responsive and influentially connected to the environment and perceive themselves as effective within it.

Accordingly, Rosa’s theory suggests that running connects the athletes to his body, the world, and the present through resonant liaison. In resonant liaison, the athlete’s self and the world that surrounds him mutually intertwine. Within this state of interconnection, the athlete’s body and the surrounding environment impact and radically change each other simultaneously. The theory posits that responsivity (instead of productivity) is at the center of the movement of the endurance athlete’s body through the world (ibid). For Rosa, trail running is more about identifying meaning rather than the proactive development of meaning (ibid). In other words, the purpose of the interaction between the endurance athlete’s body and the environment or trail in which he is running is not to relay, repeat, or echo the movement of limbs and other parts of the athletes’ body. Rather, it aims to establish resonance. That is, the exchange seeks to create a form of responsive relationship in which two interrelated poles remain active and find meaning within their unique connections (Costa 2020). Through running, the endurance runner opens his eyes to a new world and acknowledges how he is inseparable from the surrounding world (Carter 2018). By comprehending the intersections, the athlete notes the symbolic value residing in each of their strides. His “aliveness” emerges and the essence of life becomes clear (ibid). In the resulting introspection and reflection, the athlete and the surrounding world will connect through a mechanism known commonly as resonant liaison.

In the context of trail or endurance running, resonant liaison develops as a consequence of the athlete’s interaction with a human artifact, a landscape, a person, or the small community of trail runners he is competing with. As the endurance athlete moves throughout the trail, he establishes contact with the human artifacts, landscapes, and persons he encounters. During this encounter, the endurance athlete establishes resonance by recognizing and self-internalizing the bonds of attraction that connect him to the challenging landscape, the person, and the small community of individuals taking part in the endurance race (Simpson and al. 2014). Internalizing the forces will create a connection that reveals itself in the care that the small community of athletes participating in the race. Interestingly, athletes have reported experiencing a sensation that separates them and other individuals participating in the endurance race from the rest of the world (ibid). The athletes have reported that they reach a level in which they understand and connect with each other because endurance running is an experience that very few can understand (ibid). These claims reveal that endurance runners form resonant bonds that last long after the race. The establishment of the resonant bond or liaison leads to an expansion in the present time and influences the athlete to conduct himself as a decentered and centered being. In the process, the athlete connected to the environment or the person, or the trail runner notices the emergence of bonds that reveal the existence of the self. Though the process sounds straightforward, the bonds established between the athletes, their world, their bodies, and their present are not harmonious or complementary. This is because the establishment of resonant liaison between the athlete and the world presupposes a recognition of the existence of estrangement or indifference in most relations between athletes, the environment, and other athletes using the same trail. This preexisting indifference makes it impossible to create for running to generate a harmonious connection between the athlete, their body, the present, and the world.

Rosa acknowledges this in his assertion that the attainment of resonance is impossible in settings characterized by pure harmony or the absence of isolation. According to Rosa, resonance is a type of hope that signals the possibility of response and adaptive change in a

world gripped with silence. Behind the quest to establish resonant liaison is the pain of the ostracized and the clamor of the unreconciled. At the root of resonant liaison lies not the repression or denial of the objects that resist people, but the fleeting belief of the emergence of a transcending hope. These momentary but significant instances of resonance are a first-hand rebuke of the dualism of the material world. Specifically, these temporary moments constitute the period when the endurance athlete realizes, through encounters with the world around him, that the heart of human existence is neither in the side of the world nor in the side of the self. Through these temporary experiences, athletes learn that though the things that are important in their lives exist, they are neither objective nor subjective. They are also neither outside nor inside. They also realize that those things are beyond the reach of the spiritual or political realms.

However, the connection does not manifest in all endurance athletes. Attempts to establish a connection with the body, the world, and the present fails if there is no resonant relationship between the athlete and the environment. A resonant linkage between the ultra-endurance runner and his environment can only develop in settings with a dialectic that has characteristics. These are vulnerability to the other, self-affirmation, and openness and closure. Therefore, running will only connect the athlete to the world, the present, and his body when a dialectic of susceptibility to the other, self-affirmation, and openness and closure informs the relationship between the athlete and his environment. In such a setting, the interaction will reveal meaning and running will exceed the athletes' expectations. More simply, the connection between the athlete, his body, the present, and the world is not an exercise in futility. However, Rosa points out that the athletes' attempt to establish meaning can fail from the standpoint of the subject and the object. From the perspective of the subject, the connection can weaken and fail when the subject becomes too inflexible and incapable of responding to the surrounding environment with empathy. In addition to this, efforts to establish a resonant liaison can become futile in instances where the subject becomes radically open. In such a setting, the subject becomes lost in the world by forfeiting its frequency, becoming formless, and losing its voice. In the long term, the subject will begin to function primarily as an echo of the surrounding environment rather than a source of resonance. These arguments indicate that running fails to connect the trail runner to the present, the body, and the world when the subject is too rigid or too open.

## **Conclusion**

Platonic texts, Hadot's oceanic feeling, and Rosa's theory of resonance reveal the pathways through which running connects endurance athletes to their bodies, the world, and the present. Platonic texts reveal that running connects endurance athletes to the present by allowing them to use movement to immerse themselves in a state of presence. The texts suggest that movement encompasses a sense of active presence in which the athletes engage in a constant exchange with "Being". Hadot's oceanic feeling discloses how trail running connects athletes' bodies to the world. Hadot notes that the interaction between the athlete and the surrounding landscape creates a sense of wonder that leads the athlete to develop a deep fascination with it. Rosa's theory of resonance explains the connection between the athlete and the world. It suggests that the athlete connects with the world through resonant liaison. Eventually, the practice of trail running allows a certain understanding of the world through the activity of the body and the perceptions it provides, the product of an effort "source of joy, because he feels an increase in perfection by accomplishing it, perceives his body with more coherence" (Delassus 2014, 123).

Based on the work of French philosopher Claire Marin, ultra-endurance running is a very simple and radical way to feel alive. If the attention to life is very lively in children, it seems to dull as we get used to the evidence of its presence. The author explores the possibility of

reviving this feeling of being alive. What makes it reappear, what makes life sensitive again, in us and outside us? Running makes life perceptible, corporeal, sensual and sensitive, the runner becomes progressively embodied, as the distance progresses, he dives into his own body, on the one hand, and into the feeling of being alive on the other. “In order to nourish this concern for the living, it is perhaps necessary to have experienced the ephemeral nature of life itself, to have lost a little of the vital assurance proper to health” (Marin 2016, 407). Ultra-endurance running can be physically challenging for the body. As a result, runners are able to experience their own bodies in a unique way, becoming more aware of their physical abilities and limitations. This process of self-discovery can also awaken a greater sensitivity to the world, allowing runners to connect with their surroundings in a deeper and more meaningful way. Overall, ultra-endurance running can be a powerful tool for cultivating a greater sense of awareness and appreciation for the world and our own bodies. The activity also allows runners to tap into a deeper sense of wonder and awe. As runners push their bodies to their limits and overcome physical challenges, they are able to tap into a sense of resilience and determination that can be truly inspiring. This sense of accomplishment can be further enhanced by the sense of connection that runners feel with the natural world, as they become more attuned to the rhythms and patterns of the environment around them.

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