

For [University of Venus](#)
Shared 24 October 2023 with Mary 😊

Slowing down calms the (academic) soul

Embracing and honoring ecological, spiritual, embodied wisdoms as Slow Ontology 2.0

SEO headline: Friends learn how to slow down and balance work and life

SEO summary: A story of finding sun and peace in new environments and educational roles

Anna CohenMiller and Nadia Dresscher-Lambertus



Modern postcards: WhatsApp photos shared between Anna and Nadia; collage by Nadia

From April 30 to October 20, 2023, we have been sharing with one another about our lives in transition. Anna had recently moved from Kazakhstan to Spain and was starting a new position in Norway. And Nadia had moved from Aruba to the Netherlands. The complexity of these moves across time and space with two young children each to settle into new languages, cultures, and ecological environments jarred our bodies and minds, while also opening up

potential for nourishing and finding our center, finding new ways of being, and cultivating belonging in our new realities.

We were drawn to Jasmine Ulmer's work on Slow Ontology and talked with her about how we saw our engagement with the ideas of slowing down in a new format, through texting and messages sent asynchronously to one another. We haven't met in person and only heard each other's voices in brief moments on videos shared with one another, sharing bits and pieces of our lives as academics, as mothers, and as women, as spirits. And the order of what comes first can shift, and perhaps must shift. We are first spirits, honoring the wisdom and knowledge of our ancestors, of the lands, and of the animals, while also moving forward in our own knowledge traditions that are wrapped in skin and muscle yet are beyond description of physical form.

The following are selected excerpts and descriptions expanded upon from a loving and paced exchange between spirits of this world, moving from today back in time to when we started our sharing.

"I wanted to share with you a *yurik* chanting, a song of Indigenous peoples led by a Sami artist. At the conference, we were all guided in how to sing it together, chant together, bit by bit, in rounds"

"This is so powerful. As if all the resilience of each individual, their inner resources, their stories, and their love unite in one collective vibration, making it a collective body.

The world needs so much of this right now—this beautiful vibration.

Your message makes my heart smile."

"I have been thinking these days a lot of our life force and how slow ontology makes us realize that it is something we share with our ecologies."

"What a beautiful body of water! The sounds, as if her movements speaks and welcome"

"I can feel why the path made you stop, as if you become one with the landscape, with all."

"I find myself wanting to settle into writing, and when I have things to do that have a timed aspect to them (getting kiddos to summer camp, for instance), I don't feel like testing. Today I've pushed myself a bit to not do it (text perfectly or completely) and just to write and share."

"It has been very hot here, over 40C (104F) and the heat does something so interesting. It reminds me to not fight back."

"It makes my heart happy to receive your message, from where you are, and by that, I mean in all the layered timelines of life."

"I had work planned this week; I was nudged to come back to center and the family. An embodied feeling of connecting to the earth... I am so grateful for flexibility and the chance to listen to the flow"

"I am working to not go into the future and concerns of the timelines of school calendars... I'm remembering that there are different ways. When I think of nature, for instance, and I think of slow ontology, I think of the flow of life and listening to our rhythms, and I am working on doing this listening."

"Here the sun is really present, warming all. I've had a couple of days that my nervous system was a bit overwhelmed with combining work, kids, and all the newness, but the intensity and lushness of spring is such a great mother of all, and just stopping and breathing restores."

"I find the mountains fascinating, their shapes. The fog coming in reminds me that I can feel... I don't fault the mountains or the sky. Maybe I can translate that to myself and the fog I felt this morning. There's beauty and slowness in it that helped me be in light."

"Sending you ease, rest, and gentleness for your nervous system and a lovely day."

"I love the positives here and the peace in what you've shared."

"A sonic experience so beautiful, your surroundings are so layered."

"What a blessing to think about the idea of my body not negotiating any more to fit another timeline or rhythm. People talk about getting older and not being able to do the other things of youth. And maybe it is a blessing again. The body is telling us something deep and meaningful."

"I have been thinking and feeling into your invitation."

"The changing of temporalities is what opens up creativity."

"This slow ontology is so beautiful and yet scary because society goes with such an accelerated speed, and sometimes I feel that I'm behind with so much because I'm slower, but then my body is rested; I feel regenerated and anew and so creative, but the body doesn't negotiate anymore when it's tired, or maybe now more than ever for me, it's a phase, a state, to nurture all the changes."

"I needed to grieve a lot; it hasn't been easy, the move."

"Within minutes of finishing some writing and lying back on the stones in nature, I heard (sheep) bleating."

"These are huge changes we are navigating together with our families."

“Nature, this, provides a possible, but not singular, lens through which to write as Slow spreads in the countenance of speed” (Ulmer, 2016, p. 203)

Sending each other a message became, in itself, a practice of remembering to slow down, noticing what our bodies were telling us, and seeing ourselves as part of our ecologies, which is the larger body to which we belong. The act of sending these messages to each other cultivated a bond between us because we were not only individually slowing down, but we were in a way reminding each other to do this wherever each was by the act of inviting the other in, in an asynchronous way- to witness this moment too.

Anna CohenMiller is a transnational motherscholar, TEDx speaker and multiple award-winning researcher, author and educational leader. A full professor at Nord University in Norway, Anna specializes in demystifying research using innovative arts-based approaches to cultivate awareness, connection, collaboration and community alliances promoting justice-centered praxis.

Nadia Dresscher-Lambertus is an Aruban interdisciplinary researcher and teacher at the faculty of arts and science at the University of Aruba and at the department of interdisciplinary social science at the University of Utrecht. She is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Amsterdam as part of the Digital Methods Initiative within the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis.