Hartmut Rosa

Acceleration and Alienation - Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality
Sold to

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»What is a good life – and why aren’t we living it?«

About

This book is a short essay on modern life. It strives to ask the 'right' sorts of questions that would allow social philosophy and sociology to speak to the everyday reality of people living in late-modern societies.

The rapid acceleration of social life is one of the salient characteristics of the present, but it is frequently overlooked by the social sciences. Hartmut Rosa’s work on this topic has been truly groundbreaking. In his latest essay he presents an outline for a critical social theory that takes the relationship between acceleration and alienation seriously.

At the centre of his analysis is the question of the good life – and why so many people today are failing to lead one. After all, the liberalisation of moral norms and social conventions has meant that individuals living in Western societies are freer than ever before to choose and pursue their own definitions of the good life. But this liberalisation stands in opposition to the seemingly unstoppable acceleration of social life under capitalism. This regime of deadlines causes designs for life to fail and leads to an increasingly widespread sense of alienation.

»Modern societies [are] regulated, coordinated, and controlled by means of a close-meshed time regime [...] which ethical concepts do not normally articulate.«

With great care and using concrete examples, Rosa goes in search of forms of unalienated life. This incisive essay is more than just a concise introduction to the theory of acceleration, it also opens up entirely new perspectives on how we can escape this feverish stagnation.

Praise

»His most recent volume, entitled Acceleration and Alienation, gathers all the various thematic threads of his past publications and presents them in accessible language which neatly couples theoretical perspectives with cogent insights into the daily lives of stressed-out citizens of the West.« *NZZ*