

RESONANCE, ACCELERATION, AND PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE FEMININE BODY

**A critical perspective on Hartmut Rosa's theory with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and
Iris Marion Young**

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I give a critical perspective on the theory of acceleration and resonance developed by Hartmut Rosa with phenomenology of the feminine body. For this I will make use of embodied phenomenology developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and specifically with the perspective of feminine existence of theory developed by Iris Marion Young. Rosa's notion of resonance is about a successful relationship to the world. With this he criticizes society on having an alienating effect because of acceleration, which modernity is characterized by. In this thesis I argue it is problematic that Rosa does not specifically include the situatedness of women in his theory of modernity, and I therefore in this thesis incorporate the feminine bodily existence in his theory of acceleration and resonance. Additionally, by turning to the theory of Young I challenge the claim of Rosa that women are more prone to obtain resonance. With this I show how Rosa does not acknowledge how feminine existence in this modern society is rooted in a system of oppression. I will also make a comparison and show how feminine existence is oppressed in some of the same ways that people are oppressed by the underlying mechanisms of the accelerating society in terms of spatiality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hartmut Rosa notes how the story and the concept of ‘modernity’ can be told in a great number of ways. Rosa therefore made a theory that connects these aspects and built a theory of acceleration that according to him is the uniform trend and problem of modernity. Modern societies are characterized by systematic changes in temporal structures. Modernity is the process of acceleration and Rosa sees this as the primary reason for alienation. According to him the most concise formulation of his theory is: “If acceleration is the problem, then resonance may well be the solution” (Rosa, 2019, p.1). Rosa is interested in the ‘good life’ and builds his theory of ‘resonance’ in search for this successful relationship with the world that must counteract the alienation caused by the ‘oppression’ of acceleration of contemporary society. Rosa acknowledges that this relationship with the world is influenced by the way we are situated, however sees his theory of resonance in the end as something that is universally applicable. In this thesis I will examine how his theory holds when including the situatedness of the feminine body in this society.

This thesis gives answer to the question: What does it mean for Rosa’s sociology of our relationship to the world when we include the feminine bodily existence? This is not only an addition with including this situatedness of women, but it also includes a strong critique on Rosa on not including it in his theory. Additionally, will the assumptions he does make about women in his theory be criticized and disputed with the perspective of critical embodied phenomenology. In this thesis I will thus argue that his theory of social critique based on resonance is not as universal as Rosa portrays, and I will argue he makes some wrong conclusions about feminine existence, by using the perspective of phenomenology of the feminine bodily existence developed by Iris Marion Young.

1.1 LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

Hartmut Rosa is a German sociologist and political scientist, professor of sociology at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, and he studied philosophy at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. In this thesis I will make use of three books of Hartmut Rosa in which he each describes a different focus of the same theory. The works of Rosa that will be referred to in this thesis are: ‘Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity’ (2013), ‘Alienation and Acceleration Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality’ (in

Dutch: ‘Leven in tijden van versnelling. Een pleidooi voor resonantie’) (2016), and ‘Resonance. A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World’ (2019).

Rosa builds a philosophical theory and employs phenomenology and sometimes refers to Merleau-Ponty, and uses these philosophical insights to build his social criticism. It is interesting how a philosophical analysis of our relationship with the world and a notion of ‘the good life,’ is used for a critical view towards society. In critical phenomenology this phenomenological perspective towards lived experience is also combined with, and used for, a critical view towards conditions of society. In this thesis I will include the situation of feminine existence in modern society.

I will give a critical perspective on Rosa’s theory with the article ‘Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality,’ developed by Iris Marion Young (1980). This is a feminist perspective on the account of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and includes the situation of women in the theory of the lived body. Rosa employs phenomenology to explain his notion of resonance as a certain way of relating to the world. To give this theory of our relationship to the world more philosophical depth and connect the theory of resonance more concretely with embodied phenomenology, I will use the work ‘Phenomenology of Perception’ developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012) (Original work published as *Phénoménologie de la perception* in 1945).

Because this thesis focusses on phenomenology, this thesis will focus on the *experience* of acceleration and the relationship to the world. In the same way that Merleau-Ponty built a theory based on the experience of life, rather than abstractions or theorisations of life. When giving an overview of acceleration I will also focus on the way Rosa argues it influences our obtainment of resonance. Therefore, I will select the underlying mechanisms and the way Rosa describes this is subjectively experienced and influences our relationship to the world.

1.2 RELEVANCY AND IMPORTANCE

Rosa (2012) mentions that group-specific differences and the aspect of gender are not included in his work: “That this question is not given much attention in the present work does not mean that I think it is irrelevant. However, it appears to me to be of rather secondary importance with respect to a systematic acceleration theoretical analysis of modernity” (p.27). Rosa argues that acceleration affect both men and women and is therefore an overarching social critique. I suggest that for women their group-specific position in society

might not be of secondary importance, when they live in a patriarchal and sexist society that impacts their relationship to the world as well. Rosa writes a social critique on the accelerating aspect of modernity based on the alienating effect it has. I think you cannot take this one aspect of society in isolation. Especially when trying to build a universal theory of modernity. This thesis will include the oppression of women and thus the patriarchal aspect of modernity, which I will show has this alienating effect as well. In chapter 3 I will show how it may impact the relationship to the world in some similar ways as acceleration does.

Especially when building a social critique, I think it is important to include dimensions of oppression in your theory. The impact of structural factors, besides acceleration, is important for the understanding of individuals position within society and their relationship to the world. And the impact of modernity's tendencies can be asymmetric when a certain group experiences oppression in that same modern society. If Rosa argues that we can use our relationship to the world to critique social structures, and women have a different way of relating to the world caused by this exact society, this impacts the whole of Rosa's theory. Therefore, my contribution of explicitly including the feminine existence in this social critique and this search for 'the good life,' is relevant and even crucial.

In his later work Rosa (2019, e.g., pp.381-403) does mention the cultural and sociocultural factor of being woman. However here he claims that women are better in obtaining resonance, and thus in the ability to have a better relationship to the world. I think this is a glorification of feminine existence, and overlooks that feminine existence is rooted in a system of oppression. In this thesis this will be developed in further detail.

1.3 OUTLINE

In chapter 2 I will give an overview and exposition of Rosa's theory. In section 2.1 I will select the relevant aspects of acceleration and how this relate to our relationship to the world. Section 2.2 includes an overview and conceptualization of the notions of alienation and resonance that Rosa made, and in section 2.3 the methodology of Rosa will be illustrated. This chapter also already includes my interpretation and some critique or considerations. In chapter 3 becomes specifically clear why the philosophy of embodied phenomenology is the right source for a critical analysis of the theory of Rosa. In section 3.2 I will give an addition to Rosa's theory by including the feminine bodily existence, as well as criticizing the way Rosa makes wrong assumptions about the female relationship to the world. Section 3.3 consists of the comparison between the effects of the underlying mechanisms of acceleration

and of the aspects of oppression of feminine existence, as well as combining these aspects to see how resonance applies to feminine existence.

2. ROSA'S THEORY OF ACCELERATION AND RESONANCE

This chapter will focus on the exposition of Hartmut Rosa's theory of acceleration and resonance and his methodology. I will focus on the aspects of acceleration that are relevant for his idea of resonance and select the aspects of his theory of resonance that show an understanding of his notion about our relationship to the world. With this I also give my interpretations of the theory and some critical reflections. This gives a fundament for the rest of this thesis to build on and to see how this theory holds or works when applying the phenomenology of the feminine body. This chapter will mainly discuss Rosa's theory of social acceleration and resonance. I will solely use theory of sociologist Antony Giddens when appropriate to illustrate what Rosa means with certain concepts or ideas. Rosa also makes use of his theory, and it sometimes provides some clarification when explaining Rosa's ideas.

Rosa (2013) argues that what characterizes modernity and its problems, all comes down to acceleration. This claim is not a value judgement and thus Rosa does not see acceleration as a problem per se. However, the problem he addresses is that this dynamization of the world results in alienation. Rosa is in the end interested in a contribution to the question of the good life. The *good life* is for him about a successful (versus unsuccessful) relationship to the world. And whilst alienation is a wrong or failed way of relating to the world, Rosa (e.g., 2019, p.444) introduces resonance as antithesis, opposite, or 'Other' of alienation. This will be elaborated and nuanced in section 2.2. With this notion of resonance Rosa claims to go further than criticizing modernity by opposing a solution and a search for a better way of being.

This thesis will mainly focus on resonance – and thus about this specific relationship to the world that Rosa describes – and will go less into the aspects and characteristics of his theory of modern society. It is however important to introduce this problem of how alienation comes about due to acceleration, because resonance is to be understood as ameliorating or overcoming this alienation. Or to state it with Rosa: "If acceleration is the problem, then resonance may well be the solution" (Rosa, 2019, p.1). Resonance is not only a moment of a way of living or relating to the world, but he also uses 'resonance' as a conceptual tool to criticize modernity based on the alienating effect it has. Hence, we should at least have a sense of the problem of acceleration in modern society because our relationship to the world is both a consequence as well as a cause of acceleration. Therefore, Rosa describes this

problem as a self-reinforcing circular process (2019, p.1). For this reason, the underlying mechanisms, and features of the acceleration in modern society will be explained that have power over our relationship to the world.

2.1 SOCIAL ACCELERATION

In this first section of chapter 2, I will first go into Rosa's critical theory of modernity based on acceleration. Rosa (2019) claims acceleration is "the uniform trend underlying the multiplicity of European, Asian, American, African, and Micronesian modernities as well as the distinct epochs stretching from the early modern period through the age of Fordism up to contemporary late modernity" (p.307). In the end of this chapter, I have established a notion of the temporally constructed aspect of the modern world. I will go into thematically organized aspects that I find to be relevant relating to alienation and compromising resonance which I will discuss in section 2.2. The emphasis in this chapter will be on the essential mechanisms of transformation that play a role in the way time is structured and what they entail. I will not go into the causes or results of acceleration but chose to focus on the underlying mechanisms that are fundamental for the way we experience this acceleration.

2.1.1 Dynamic Stabilization

Rosa (2013) argues that "the experience of modernization is an experience of acceleration" (p.21) and (re)conceptualizes contemporary social theory on basis of acceleration. He emphasises that his concept of social acceleration is based on the idea that modernization is not only something that happens *in* time, but the notion refers to a transformation *of* time and the structures of time themselves (Rosa, 2013, p.4). According to Rosa (2019, pp.404-424) the core of his analysis of modernity is that a society is modern when its *mode of stabilization and reproduction is dynamic*. This means that for it to keep the status quo, it needs growth, acceleration, innovation, and increased speed and productivity. So, both on individual and collective level, we need to keep running faster to keep what we have and to feel like we keep in pace with the accelerating world. According to Rosa (2019, p.1; pp.405-407) this can also be understood as a tendency to escalation, because the only way to stabilize itself is dynamically, and will thus keep increasing. Important for his theory is that Rosa argues this process or development changes the way we experience time, because whilst everything is increasing in quantity and speed, the thing cannot increase is time itself. Rosa makes the comparison with how the acceleration of modern society feels like being caught in a hamster wheel.¹ Because to stay in the same place, we need to go faster without us moving forward any more than we do.

¹ Manel Queralt, *Hartmut Rosa – Social Acceleration* [Video]. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSF8Jx8AfmI>

2.1.2 Three dimensions of social acceleration

Social acceleration is seen by Rosa (2013, pp.53-55) as growth in quantity per unit of time. The meaning of 'quantity' can be various things. Rosa (2013; 2016, pp.17-29) distinguishes three categories of our modern society that are speeding up or have an accelerating effect: technological acceleration, social change, and pace of life. In each of these aspects a growth of something specific per unit of time can be recognized. Technological acceleration is described by Rosa as a growth in the possibility to do more things in a shorter time. The acceleration of the pace of life is the experience of having too little time. And the acceleration of social change is about the increase of speed at which social changes occur. These dimensions have their underlying mechanisms and features that result from or cause the acceleration in modern society. Aspects of these categories will hereafter be discussed relating to the transformation of time and its structures and how this can be experienced.

Technological acceleration: disconnection from place

Rosa (2013) describes how in modern society there is a revolutionizing of space-time regime where time is liberated from space: "The birth hour of modernity, one might say with some plausibility, was the emancipation of time from space that stands at the beginning of the acceleration process" (p.28). So, our temporal orientations have become separated from spatial qualities we observe. Also, according to Giddens (1999, pp.15-18), our awareness of time and space in the modern world is no longer (or less) connected *through* the situatedness of place: "the 'when' of these actions is directly connected to the 'where' but not, as in pre-modern epochs, via the mediation of place" (p.17). So, we can recognize time without qualities of spatial characteristics and therefore temporal structures also can be assessed independent from how spatial structures change. This is part of technological acceleration. We move much faster from place to place, which results in the loss of meaning in the way we orient ourselves in this spatial world. According to Giddens this results in a standardization and globalization of time. Technological innovations have made it possible to have a universal measurement of time and interacting with everyone around the world. This means that not only time can be determined without space, but the meaning of space is changing as well. Because modern society is characterized by little spatial restrictions, Rosa (2016, p.55) even argues that this change goes as far as space becoming meaningless.

So, in modernity we can mainly because of technological growth, go to places a lot faster and we know everything that is happening around the world, without needing to go there. This means we no longer need to be somewhere in order to experience something. We can connect with the entire world, and there are no or less spatial or geographical barriers. Which causes us to be disconnected from space and spatial orientations.

Acceleration of social change: shrinking of the 'present' and increase of contingency

The acceleration of social change refers to the rate at which changes occur. This is made possible, or even made inevitable, by technological acceleration. Technological acceleration is about processes within society, but social acceleration regards acceleration of society itself (Rosa, 2016, pp.19-20). Social acceleration is defined by Rosa (2016, p.21) as an increase in the decay rate of the reliability of experiences and expectations and as the shortening of the time periods to be defined as present. To illustrate this, Rosa (2016, pp.20-21) introduces the idea of 'the contraction of the present' by philosopher Herman Lübbe to explain the underlying mechanism of the acceleration of social change. Here the 'past' is defined as 'that which no longer applies' and the future is that which 'does not yet apply'. And in the present time, the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectation' coincide. In the present time there therefore is an overlap in what you experience - of what 'is' – and what you expect it to be. However, with social acceleration this present time becomes shorter. I interpret this as that, because changes in society happen faster, your expectations of what applies will be correct for a shorter time. Following Rosa's definition of social acceleration this means two things: a shrinking of the present (a), and therefore an increase of contingency (b).

The moment in which your experiences and expectations coincide is the only moment you live in certainty. This moment is defined as present and is experienced as reliable. According to Rosa social acceleration is a process of an increase in the decay rate of reliability and the shortening of the present. With this then comes a loss of certainty because there is a shrinkage of how long we can assume stability. Examples given by Rosa (2016, p.21) are the decreasing stability of people's phone number or popularity of television personalities, or the increase of the number of times people change profession in life. With this increase of contingency (or increase in decay rate of reliability) also comes more reflexivity as a result. Because this loss of pre-established precepts and practices, we are obliged to continuously reflect. I would translate this idea to that it can be seen as living

more towards the future, to anticipate of future change. And if you take this further, I think this could perhaps come to a point where there is a loss of present, because changes happen faster than you (can) expect. And thus, living in - or orienting to - the future, rather than really engaging in the present.

Acceleration of pace of life: shrinking of time itself

This last dimension of acceleration deals with the lack of time in society. The acceleration of the pace of (social) life is defined by Rosa (2016, p.24) as the increase in the number of acts or episodes of experience per unit of time. So, time becomes scarce. This results from the desire or felt need to do more in less time, and thus the subjective feeling of time pressure. Technological acceleration means a faster output. It is for example possible to drive more miles per unit of time, or there is an increase of the amount of data that can be processed per unit of time. Rosa (2016, pp.23-29) notes that because tasks can be done in a smaller unit of time you might expect that this would cause you to have more time to spare, because time is freed up. However, he claims that it turns out that the opposite is true. This is because it causes us to also want to (or need to) do more in that time. An example he uses is the way we use our email system: we can send people messages way quicker, however this also results in us sending way more. In the end I think this increase in pace of life can be recognized because the growth stays greater than the acceleration: The pace of life keeps accelerating because we keep on wanting to do more tasks in a unit of time, than the technological growth allows. Because Rosa (2019, p.405) shows how acceleration entails that the only way to stabilize is dynamically.

Circular process

As implied but not yet clarified, these features of acceleration relate to each other as a circular process. Rosa describes this as a process in which these dimensions influence and reinforce each other. Technological acceleration and growth are described by Rosa as condition for the possibility of acceleration of the pace of life because it makes it possible to do more things in a shorter amount of time. Think here of writing emails instead of letters: It goes faster, but we (therefore) also do it a lot more. And that we do more things in lesser time, then again does result in the increase of speed at which changes occur.

2.2 ALIENATION AND RESONANCE

In this second section of chapter 2, I will give an account of Rosa's notions of alienation and resonance. Rosa does not see acceleration as something negative per se or in all cases. However, he recognizes that the dynamization of modernity can - and often does - result in alienation. The word alienation lost its power in social philosophy according to Rosa (2019, p.26; p.175) because it often does not go further than the feeling of something being wrong, or a dissatisfaction with existing conditions. As Rosa (2019) notes, a better but still vague description is – following Rahel Jaeggi – that with alienation “subjects are incapable of successfully appropriating some segment of world and thus become caught in a ‘relation of relationlessness’ to it” (p.27). Rosa (2019, p.175) notes that this always is a relational term, which means it only has meaning when you specify *what* a subject or community is alienated *from*. People can be alienated from themselves, from their fellow human beings, and from the world of things. In this thesis I will focus on alienation from the world, and I will thus focus on a mute or resonant relationship to the world. In chapter 3 some aspects of a relationship with yourself and your body will however also be described, when this is important for the relationship with the world.

For a way of understanding the notion of alienation better, and because Rosa is interested in the ‘good life,’ he introduces the theory of resonance that shows the right way of relating to the world. Rosa (2019, p.9). He argues that both alienation and resonance only have power when you can also define and think of the opposite.

2.2.1 Aspects of resonance

Rosa describes a great number of aspects needed for the precise conceptualization and demarcation of his concepts of alienation and resonance. I will not describe them all but will go into a few that are relevant for the argument in this thesis in the upcoming chapters. I categorized the aspects I recognized in his conceptualization and found interesting or necessary for the demarcation of his notion of resonance, or the aspects he repeatedly mentions and emphasizes. Rosa describes resonance as a relation between subject and world, characterized by aspects as an experience of the world calling upon it, which requires it to be a reciprocal relationship with a world that is responsive, as well as a subject that is responsive to a world. This will be elaborated hereinafter.

Relational and active

Rosa (2019, pp.165-166) tries to illustrate the meaning of the concept of resonance by using physical phenomena like soundwaves. But Rosa in the end does not define resonance as physical or substantial, but as relational concept that expresses a mode of being-in-the-world.

The core idea here is that the two entities in relation, in a vibratory medium (or resonant space), mutually affect each other in such a way that they can be understood as *responding to each other*, at the same time each *speaking with its own voice*. (Rosa, 2019, p.167)

Resonance is a successful relationship with the world and Rosa emphasizes that is all about the *relationship* between object and subject. Rosa (2019) describes this as if there “emerges something like a *vibrating wire* between us and the world” (p.8). I interpret this as a certain felt connection with what you do or what you relate to. The world is the whole of the (potential) experience, in which a subject always already finds itself engaging in or relating to (Rosa, 2019, pp.32-35). This relationship is not about a subject exploring its surroundings, but is constitutive of a subject in the first place (Rosa, 2019, p.50), and similarly and simultaneously constitutive of the world:

If we accept this notion of a fundamental relatedness that precedes the division of subject and object and serves the very basis both of the presence of the world and of subjective experience, then resonance appears not as something that first develops between self-conscious subject and a ‘premade’ world, but as the event through which both commence. (Rosa, 2019, p.35)

This is a phenomenological theory of resonance according to which consciousness only arises from the relationship between the human being and the environment. I interpret this as that the experience of the world is always something that happens because we are irrevocably already in a world and without this world we relate to, we would not experience, and would not be a subject.

Rosa (2019, pp.145-164) describes a connection of resonance as mirroring and interacting with the environment with responsive attitudes. When this relation is resonant

you have a successful relation, while otherwise the axes of resonance between subject and the world lie mute (Rosa, 2019, p.9). Resonance comes from the experience of responsivity of the world; Of a world that is receptive and reactive, as well as the self that is responsive to a world.

Resonant experiences describe a specific mode of relation between a subject and a certain segment of the world. This relationship (...) may be understood from the standpoint of the subject as a vibrating wire formed by af←fect and e→motion, i.e., by the double movement of passively being affected by and actively relating to. (Rosa, 2019, p.172)

That is why Rosa (2019, p.455) also calls resonance bidirectional. What he describes as ‘af←fectivity’ is about the way we are touched, moved, and gripped. While at the same time we for example reach, touch, and affect something. The latter is what he means by ‘e→motion.’ According to Rosa (2019, p.172; p.455) resonance is only present when these modes are both present at the same time. This means that resonance also is inherently an active phenomenon, because to come to this relation we need to engage in the world and actively experience and affect the world around us. Rosa (2019) says that for resonance you feel you can attain or affect something, and at the same time be affected be touched: “to be touched, moved, gripped, (...) also by plants and mountains, by music and stories, by challenges” (2019, p.9).

Responsive and positive

Rosa (2016, p.131) distinguishes three basic modes that can be discerned in our relationship to the world: resonance, indifference, and repulsion. Alienation manifest according to Rosa (2019) as “experiences of either indifference or repulsion, i.e., as encounters that strike us as hostile or injurious” (p.447). And resonance as antithesis then includes the experience of a world that is responsive and positive.

Rosa (2016, p.136; 2019, p.445) describes alienation as an objectifying, ‘cold’ (dis)engagement: the world then faces you as indifferent. Rosa describes this as a world that does not respond or does not lie responsive. But I think you could just as easily describe this as a world that does not ‘touch’ you. That you do not have the experience that something sparks you. Rosa describes resonance then as a world that responds. This is about the way

you relate to that world and experience the world. I suggest you could just as easily say that in a resonant relationship to the world, you *experience* the world as responsive. That you experience the world as it doing something to you, as ‘answering’ to you. When you for example feel touched by a certain music or feel moved by a beautiful story.

Rosa proposes that resonance is always a responsive relation, but also argues it is always experienced as a positive encounter with the world. To defend this division why resonance is not both a positive and negative relation, and why a responsive relation of repulsion is a relation of alienation Rosa (2019) says the following: “dispositional resonance is an attitude that consciously accepts vulnerability and is constitutively rooted in openness, while *repulsion* describes a relationship to the world defined by inner hardening or closure” (p.448). Thus, because repulsion would mean a closing off from the world, Rosa says this could never be a resonant relation. For this Rosa uses examples where repulsion inevitable results in a closing off from the world, like acts of violence. This can be a very intense and embodied experience but will always result in a closed off relation to the world. I however would argue that repulsion indeed *may* lead to closing yourself off but can also lead to an active and connective engaged connection with the world. Even though this connection might be an unpleasant one. For example, the way art can shock or repulse you, but keeps you engaged with it and connected with it. Rosa’s notion of resonance is however only existent when something is experienced as a positive encounter with the world. In this way does Rosa (2019) describes resonance as “being shaped by a responsive, elastic, fluid, one might even say cuddly relationship to the world” (p.9).

Momentary and inaccessible

Rosa says resonance is something you can never fully establish and that it is more of “a flash of hope for adaptive transformation and response in a silent world” (Rosa, 2019, p.187). However, at the same time Rosa (2019) promotes and argues for making it possible to obtain and maintain “constitutive axes of resonance that allow them to repeatedly experience (momentary, processual, transformative) resonance and thus to adaptively transform world” (p.451). This would mean that it is possible to obtain resonance. Additionally, how Rosa earlier mentioned resonance is a ‘flash of hope’ for a response in a silent world, in the same way he writes people are able to obtain “resonance in a world experienced as otherwise silent” (Rosa, 2019, p.449). He seems to be inconsequential here.

Either way is it something that, if you can fully obtain it, you cannot hold onto for long. Rosa (2019) explains how every tendency, or way of being in a state of resonance has again a resonance-destroying character. He writes: “Resonance emerges primarily only in momentary experience; its inaccessibility is a constitutive feature, meaning that it cannot be forced and held in place or made permanent” (p.451). In the end of his book, he writes how resonance may never be fully defined without it losing some of its meaning: “the fundamental inaccessibility of resonance may even imply that it can never be fully and exhaustively grasped theoretically” (Rosa, 2019, p.459). When we will try to precisely conceptualize it and, as Rosa says, ‘philosophically nail it down’ it fades away or loses its experience or meaning. Resonance is therefore also theoretically inaccessible. Which I suggest might justify the inconsequential way of defining the border of the possibility of an almost mystical experience that resonance seems to be.

Whether it is fully obtainable or not, and whether it is precisely conceptualized or not, in the end is resonance an experience of a relationship to a world that is responsive: an experience of a world that speaks to you. To obtain this you need to engage in the world, as well as being open to the world for it to be experienced as ‘answering’ to you. So, when moving, you simultaneously are open to the world to let it ‘move’ you – and while touching, you are simultaneously open to be ‘touched’ by the world.

2.2.2 Impact of acceleration on our relationship to the world

Rosa made the operationalizable concept of social acceleration, by defining acceleration as increase in quantity per unit of time, and more specifically differentiate this in the dimensions of technological acceleration, acceleration of social change, and acceleration of pace of life. In the same way Rosa tried to build an operationalizable category of the phenomenon of resonance. More than only using ‘resonance’ as metaphor but a concept of social philosophy to work with (Rosa, 2019, p.164). But how then does acceleration impact our relationship to the world? So, while time seems to move faster and becomes scarce, space and the material becomes meaningless, and we are living towards the future and have a decrease in reliable present. And thus, acceleration means we become disconnected from space, present, and time itself. Rosa (2019) describes that because of this, subjects must be closed off from the world and must “constantly and dynamically *reposition* themselves” (p.309). This causes an increasing of relations of alienation, as thus of

‘relationlessness,’ where the world will fall silent. So, alienation is a result of acceleration and not keeping up with this escalatory and dynamic logic of the modern world. Resonance is not about a desiring of society to deaccelerate, but about an (in)dependence on the increase and multiplication of dynamic stabilization (Rosa, 2016, p.130).

2.3 SOCIOLOGY OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD

Resonance is for Rosa (2019) a measurement of the quality of life. And therefore, uses it to give critique on the social structures of modernity because it is “a critical analysis of culturally and institutionally established relationships to the world with a view to their resonant quality” (p.450). Rosa thinks resonance is the best instrument to critique social structures because in the end our whole existence consists of this relationship to the world, which is shaped by the way we relate to the world. And because our relationship to the world influences all modes of our existence – corporeal, existential, intentional, and evaluative – Rosa (2019) argues that the “*critique of relations of resonance* would appear to be the most elementary and at the same time most comprehensive form of social critique” (p.37). Because the development or hindrance of resonance is socially organized, and thus the way we have a successful or unsuccessful relation to the world is influenced by society. This is so comprehensive because Rosa sees the relationship to the world as the thing of the good life.

The critical theory of the accelerating society is a theory of modernity which is clearly sociological. However also the theory of resonance, and thus about our relationship to the world is presented by Rosa not as a philosophy or psychology (even though this is also part of the methodology) but rather as a *sociology* of relations of resonance. This is because the way we relate ourselves to the world is according to Rosa (2019, p.109) a result of things like individual dispositions, cultural worldviews, and social practices.

A sociology of human relationships to the world and especially a critique of relations of resonance absolutely cannot avoid elaborating on the specific characteristic of the modern mode of *being-in-the-world* (...) as this can make it clear and palpable that prevailing relations of resonance are not grounded in anthropology, but rather are historically contingent and thus changeable. (Rosa, 2019, p.308)

Rosa sees acceleration as the prime cause for alienation and the most important thing that hinders the obtainment of resonance in our modern society, and he sees the change of temporal structures as the uniform trend of modernity in all continents: “I sought to show that a systematic change in temporal structures can be identified as the uniform trend underlying the multiplicity of European, Asian, American, African, and Micronesian modernities” (Rosa, 2019, p.307). Additionally, Rosa says in an interview that his notion of

resonance often is misread as an individualistic notion (Lijster & Celikates, 2019). This is because it is not about a subjective stance towards the world, but about a reciprocal relationship; The relationship you have with the world, also depends on what it is you relate to. That Rosa (2019, p.37) describes resonance as a social concept, is thus because it is shaped by the context and social environment in which we find ourselves in.

Rosa argues that his theory of resonance therefore fits especially good in the pluralism of the world, because it does not focus on subjectivity nor context in which someone lives and relate to, but about the relationship between them. Rosa (2019, p.15) mentions that the quality of this relationship is influenced by the world we are in (e.g., sociocultural factors), but only in the way in to the extend they are (in)compatible with our own dispositions. And thus, the quality of our relationship to the world is impacted by our situation, but this only matters in the way how we relate to it. I think this relates to an easy example Rosa (2019, p.7) describes where two girls have the same exact day, except for the one girl it is a successful and enjoyable day, while the other girl is in a relation of alienation with the world around her. The difference is not the situation they are in but in their way of relating to it. Rosa (2019) mentions the influences of the social conditions for a successful or unsuccessful relationship to the world are “probably far more variable than we can even conceive of from our position in what has become the dominant modern relationship to the world” (p.393). Therefore, Rosa only focusses on the *relationship* between subject and world, and not on the aspects of them. By focussing only on this relationship, I think he avoids a number of problems on both sides of it. Both variables on the side of the subject and on the side of the world you relate to can differ, without the goal of obtaining resonance needing to change anything. Because resonance will always be a relative notion that needs to be considered in relation to both sides of it. And is thus only in imbalance when there is a lack of compatibility between subject and some segment of the world. With this he then, at the same time, keeps open the possibility of filling in these variables on both sides to examine the influence on a resonant or mute relation.

Rosa (2019, p.27) emphasizes that this good life (and thus a successful relationship with the world) is not based on the opportunities or share in the world you have, but on the way you are connected with it. Additionally, does Rosa say it depends “on the ways in which world is or can be passively experienced and actively appropriated or adapted” (p.27). When people in society are marginalized or oppressed because of for example the colour of their skin, their gender, or their sexual orientation, I think it is not enough to say that the

relationship to the world is relative to how you relate to this oppression. I think this is a problematic way of approaching these issues.

Additionally, I think you cannot take the aspect of the accelerating society in isolation, without taking into account the various ways you can be situated. Especially when this regards situations of oppression in society. Because as explained by Rosa, are these aspects of the world and self always interwoven and cannot be taken separate from each other. However, that in the end other perspectives or sociocultural differences “change nothing about the fundamental dilemma of modernity that we encounter” (2019, p.397) is of course a crucial element of his claim of why the acceleration is the main influence on the way we can obtain this resonant relationship. However, I think this does not justify excluding other dilemmas of modern society that influence our relationship to the world.

Rosa (2019, pp.388-397) does mention sociocultural factors when he describes the way in which certain people (e.g., catholic, feminine, and young people) could be better in obtaining a resonant relation to the world because of various reasons. However even these aspects are seen as an advantage, rather than acknowledging ways people can be marginalized in this society. Rosa (2019, pp.453-454) does mention oppression in his theory. He notes that oppression creates (and is cause for) the unequal opportunities to participate in spheres that are good for resonance.

“Contexts of oppression and repression also appear highly objectionable according to this criterion, as all forms of repression hinder the development of specific – e.g., religious, political, sexual, or aesthetic – resonances; they inhibit the development of one’s ‘own voice’ and thus the subject’s capacity for resonance” (Rosa, 2019, p.415).

So, Rosa does acknowledge the negative effects of oppression and says it influences the obtainment of resonance, however at the same time he argues that resonance is mainly influenced by the oppression of acceleration in society. If resonance is so important - and as Rosa (2019, p.37) says such an elementary and comprehensive form of social critique – this gives I think even more reason to include other aspects of society that influence our relationship to the world. Therefore, I will in this thesis include a social situatedness that is rooted in a system of oppression. Rosa (2016, p.94) emphasizes that we are necessarily and inherently embodied being. Here I think a phenomenological perspective is called for that looks more closely at the particular interactions between subject and world of particular

embodied selves. In chapter 3 I will examine one specific way of being situated, namely the feminine body in modern society. This is especially interesting because Rosa (2019, pp.388-397; pp.453-454) mentions how the gender-related differences in relations of resonance are to him of particular significance, because according to him the sensitivity to resonance is coded as female. This will be extensively explained (and refuted) in chapter 3.

3. RESONANCE, ACCELERATION, AND CRITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY

In this chapter I will go into the way the situatedness of the feminine body in this society influences or makes a difference in the way we relate to this world. So does Rosa (2019) note too that “it is highly likely that different sociocultural formations possess not only potentially completely different sensitivities to resonance, practises of resonance, and associated axes of resonance, but also different *forms of relation*” (p.393). I will focus on the way people are situated in the world based on their bodily engagement. For this I will substantiate Rosa’s theory of resonance by giving an introduction into phenomenology of embodied subjectivity as developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012). In this section some additions, differences, irregularities, and a critique on Rosa’s idea of the relation to the world will be developed. With this I will also illustrate why using these phenomenological theories about the body are the right source for an evaluation of Rosa’s theory of resonance. Additionally, I will make a critical analysis of resonance with critical phenomenology by using the work of Iris Marion Young (1980) and relate resonance to the feminine body in context of oppression. In section 3.2 I will both give an addition on his theory with including the feminine situatedness based on the oppression of patriarchal society, as well as a criticism on assumptions Rosa makes about the female relation to the world. Lastly, in section 3.3 I will examine the ways acceleration affect the obtainment of resonance in some of the same ways that the oppression of the feminine body influences our relationship to the world.

3.1 (CRITICAL) EMBODIED PHENOMENOLOGY

In this section I will provide an overview of some aspects of the theory of embodied phenomenology developed by Merleau-Ponty and relate it to Rosa's notion of resonance. This will show why this phenomenological perspective is the right source for comparison and basis for critique. Additionally, this introduction into the theory of the lived body as expressed by Merleau-Ponty is needed because Young bases her theory of the lived situation of women on these insights.

3.1.1 Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied phenomenology

Merleau-Ponty (2012, e.g., p.146) describes our relation to the world as fundamentally and inherently embodied and sees the body as the mediator of the world. Our whole experience of the world is shaped by the body and we relate to the world with our body. In the same way Rosa himself (e.g., 2016, p.131; 2019, p.50) uses phenomenology to indicate that a human being is always irrevocably in the world or relative to the world and is in a world that has meaning for us. He describes how only from involvement, and the process of being involved, that someone can appear as a subject in the world: "There is no world without a phenomenal body, and no phenomenal body without world" (Rosa, 2019, p.84). We are thus always embodied subjects and resonance is then a certain way of relating to the world that is successful. Merleau-Ponty (2012, pp.100-107) describes how when we experience the world, we do not inhabit our bodies, but we live with it and through them in the world. For this he makes a distinction between two notions of the body: the 'objective body,' which is the way we see our body as it is among other physical objects in the world, and secondly the 'lived body.' The latter is a body through which we experience the world. With this lived body we touch, move, and feel and is often described by Merleau-Ponty as the 'body schema.' In this thesis the concepts of body schema, lived body and phenomenological body will be used interchangeably. These all refer to the body that is engaging in the world with this visceral relationship, and stand in contrast to the body as object.

Visceral engagement with the lived body

Merleau-Ponty (2012) writes that "the 'body schema' is, in the end, a manner of expressing that my body is in and toward the world" (p.103). Merleau-Ponty (2012) sees the body schema as a system of motor powers or perceptual powers, that is "not an object for an

‘I think’” (p.155), but a totality of lived significations. And thus, this lived body is not a body that is seen as an object, but rather a body that engages in the world. This does not mean we cannot be conscious of what our body does or relates to, but it is more visceral than that. This can be illustrated by an example that Merleau-Ponty (2012) uses about being bitten by a mosquito:

The patient bitten by a mosquito need not look for the point of the bite; he finds it immediately, because it is not for him a matter of situating it in relation to axes of coordinates in objective space, but rather of reaching with his phenomenal hand a certain painful place on his phenomenal body. Between the hand as a power for scratching and the point of the bite as a place to be scratched, a lived relation is given in the natural system of one’s own body. The operation takes place wholly within the order of the phenomenal, it does not pass through the objective world. (p.108)

In this example it becomes clear that a body has a more visceral relation to the world with the lived body and does not need to work through the idea of the body as an object. On the phenomenological account of Merleau-Ponty (2012, p.146) this engagement is not always unconscious, but our body does engage in the world in a more visceral way. Not by privileging the physical over the mental, but it recognizes that it is one body-subject; mind and body working as one. Regarding the notion of resonance, Rosa (2019, pp.47-52) explicitly mentions that the body is not felt within a resonant relation with the world. He describes how in a resonant relation the body will always be almost unnoticed. He explains when the body is seen as an object, it will always be a mute relation with the world. This suggests that resonance requires the use of the phenomenological, lived body and this visceral engagement in the world, rather than an experience of the body as object.

Distinction lived body and object body

Rosa describes different things you can have a relationship with. You can have a relationship with your body, and you can have a relationship with the world. A relationship to the world is always through the body. In this way Rosa does distinguish between something that is comparable with the notions of the object body and the lived body. As we will see in this chapter, he however does not make this distinction when talking about the feminine relation to the world. Rosa (2019, p.83) even deliberately chose to refrain from

drawing this divide between the phenomenological/ lived body and the objective/ physical body. This is because he says it would produce conceptual problems. Additionally, he writes how “perceiving and acting human subjects *are body* and at the same time are also able to reflectively relate to said body, i.e., are able to perceive their body as an object in the world and thus in this sense can also be said to *have a body*” (p.83). Rosa (2019, pp.83-85) emphasizes that consciousness exactly must be understood as bodily, and that the world only exists through the body. He sees the objective body as the instrument through which we can experience the world: “we can describe the objective body as a ‘medium’ or ‘mediator’ between the reflexive self and the world” (p.83). However, following Merleau-Ponty you cannot engage in the world while perceiving your body as object-body. The moment you experience the world and engage in the world, this body is a phenomenological body; The body that is engaging in the world is a body-subject. Of course, it is the same physical substance of a body that both can be seen as object, as can operate in the world, but this does not mean you can perceive your body as object whilst viscerally engaging. So, the distinction between the object body and the lived body does not regard a different physical body, but rather different facets of our experience of it. Similarly, is explained by Young (1980) how “any lived body exists as a material thing as well as a transcending subject. For feminine bodily existence, however, the body is often lived as a thing which is other than it, a thing like other things in the world” (p.148). The latter way in which the body is lived as a thing like other things in the world, is the body as an object. This has implications for the relationship with the world, which will be shown later. That Rosa does not make this specific distinction between the object body and the lived body makes some of his claims flawed. Especially when relating to the feminine existence. This will be shown in the next sections.

Active engagement

Following Merleau-Ponty (2012, pp.139-141), the body that is engaging in the world is what makes our relation to the world. An orientation to the world with intentionality is what defines the relation of a subject to its world. Resonance is inherently and inevitable linked to this bodily engagement in and with the world. As discussed in chapter 2, for resonance and thus to experience the world as ‘responsive’, you need to engage and affect the world around you. Following Rosa (2019), there appears a world for us (and at the same time we become subject) insofar the body appropriates its surroundings. At the same time is asked of a resonant relationship to have an openness to the possibilities of the world.

In this section we have seen that resonance need the active intentional engagement of the visceral lived body, rather than seeing the body as an object. Note additionally that Rosa describes resonance as a positive relationship with the world. That means that being repulsed by something belongs to the notion of alienation, even though this can be a very embodied and maybe visceral experience of the world. So not all active engagement with the lived body is immediately something that comes close to resonance. This means that active engagement with the world is not sufficient for resonance, however it is important to make note that it is a requirement for resonance. And thus, a place where this active bodily engagement with the lived body misses or falls short, also necessarily is an absence of resonance. In the following sections I will show with Young's theory how these aspects of relating to the world with this active, visceral, engagement with intentionality are lacking when looking at the feminine bodily existence.

3.1.2 Young's theory of the feminine bodily existence

These insights about our relation to the world with the lived body, apply to human existence in a general way. Young (1980, e.g., p.141) uses this account of Merleau-Ponty to focus on a particular style of bodily comportment, motility, and spatiality specific for feminine existence. Young (1980) claims that "if there are indeed typically 'feminine' styles of body comportment and movement, then this should generate for the existential phenomenologist a concern to specify such a differentiation of the modalities of the lived body" (p.138). Young (1980, e.g., p.142) argues that the feminine body does not use her full capacities in the engagement and fails to make full use of the body's lateral and spatial potentialities. Women are not as open with their body as men are. And Young (1980) shows this with examples. One central example relates to the title of her article: *Throwing like a Girl*. Girls do not bring as much of their body into a throw as boys do: "They do not reach back, twist, move backward, step, and lean forward. Rather, the girls tend to remain relatively immobile except for their arms, and even the arm is not extended as far as it could be" (p.142). This is an example but is applicable to a lot of other aspects of the way the feminine body uses its capacities. Young (1980, p.141; p.152) describes how the feminine body in contemporary society often has a different way of movement and distinguishes in three modalities of feminine bodily comportment and motility: ambiguous transcendence, inhibited intentionality, and discontinuous unity. These three modalities are what prevent women from engaging in the world with full capacity. Following the lived space of Merleau-

Ponty, she recognizes that this means there are also modalities of feminine spatiality generated by these bodily comportment and motility: “Feminine existence lives space as *enclosed* or confining, as have a *dual* structure and the feminine existence experiences herself as *positioned* in space” (Young, 1980, p.149). The feminine motility directly relates to the way the feminine body engages in space, and thus the bodily relationship to the world. I suggest this is important relating to resonance, because if there is a typical feminine way of relating to the world, this would also mean there is a typical feminine way in the obtainment of resonance.

Situatedness of ‘feminine’ existence in modern society

Rosa mentions repeatedly that the relationship to the world is shaped by the society we live in. Youngs assessment of the feminine bodily existence is fundamentally rooted in modernity as well. The feminine body is always situated in a society with certain social structures. According to Young the modalities of the feminine body “have their source in the particular *situation* of women as conditioned by their sexist oppression in contemporary society” (p.152). And the feminine body is thus affected by this system of oppression in this patriarchal society. Things partly become embodied because of attitudes and expectations about bodies in this society. The whole assessment of feminine bodily existence is therefore a critique on the patriarchal and sexist social structures that cause feminine existence to be positioned in this way, and thus regards structural injustice.

It goes without saying that there are way more aspects that can be considered in the situatedness of endless different perspectives. This thesis however tries to show the differences of being with and in this world when having a feminine body in the context of contemporary society. Young (1980, pp.139-140) specifically states that her theory is about the feminine bodily existence for women situated in contemporary advanced industrial, urban, and commercial society.

Additionally, should be made clear that this section is about the specific situatedness of the *feminine* body. Rosa mentions the factor of being a woman, but Young (1980, pp.139-141) uses the understanding of the feminine body. The use of ‘feminine’ existence (opposed to ‘women’) makes it possible for some individual women to escape the described situation and idea of women, and the word allows it to be applied to some men (or any other sex or gender). I will however compare and contrast the ideas Rosa has about women with Youngs theory of the feminine body, because this is I think the right source for critique. In this thesis

this will refer to the feminine body that is oppressed in modern society, and thus about the typical lived *situation* of being a woman in this society.

3.2 RESONANCE AND THE FEMININE BODY

3.2.1 Feminine awareness of the body and being self-referred

Rosa repeatedly mentions how masculine relationships to the world are more mute and reifying, while women have a more resonant relationship to the world (Rosa, 2019, e.g., p.128; p.394). This is based on the idea that feminine character traits such as being more emotional and feelings-based are more in line with a resonant relation. As Rosa describes, realms associated with women such as education, caretaking, and religion, opposed to spheres of man like economy, science and law, are more in line with resonance. These feminine qualities he argues are what gives rise to resonant relationship. Interestingly Rosa (2019, p.128) also mentions women being more connected with their body which causes them to obtain resonance more easily. He suggests that the way women have more awareness of the body and pay more attention to the body, brings about a resonant relationship.

Rosa (2019, pp.47-52) uses the body as a medium between subject and world. When this body is ‘noticed,’ and thus ‘seen’ as an object, he himself describes the relation to the world as mute. Whilst when it is just doing its thing and has this visceral engagement, your relationship with the world can become a resonant one. As discussed I interpret this, following Merleau-Ponty, that when focussing on the object body this relation to the world is mute. I will argue in line with Young that the way Rosa describes this way of bodily connection of women is therefore not the type that would be especially useful in obtaining a (bodily) resonant relationship with the world.

Young (1980, p.148) describes the way women worry about how they look and are being looked at, and therefore have a higher degree of ‘body prominence’. This is part of the object body and thus is not about a certain presence or engagement in the world, but about the way you look at your body as object. This means that a higher degree of body prominence and awareness of how their body is perceived, is not part of the lived body that is engaging in the world. I think that Rosa by not differentiating between a consciousness of the body (objective body) and the lived body when referring to women, does not accurately describe an aspect of obtaining a resonant relationship with the world. So, how Rosa suggests that women are more in contact with their body does not necessarily follow to be a better relationship with the world, which is what Rosa’s notion of resonance is.

I think following Young, it could even be harder to obtain resonance while having this awareness of your body. And therefore, a feminine bodily subject might even be more

prone to a mute relation to the world. Young (1980) describes how the feminine body is at the same time both object and subject for itself: “Feminine bodily existence is frequently not a pure presence to the world because it is referred onto *itself* as well as onto possibilities of the world” (p.148). And the feminine body therefore is both a lived body that engages in the world as a body as object:

An essential part of the situation of being a woman is that of living the ever present possibility that one will be gazed upon as a mere body, as shape and flesh that presents itself as the potential object of another subject’s intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention. (Young, 1980, p.154)

This means that, because there is this attention to the body as a mere body, this comes at the expense of the engagement and relation with the world. And as discussed is exactly this active visceral bodily engagement with the world where a (successful) relation with the world comes from. This situation of the feminine existence is of being put into objectification by the other. Young (1980, p.154) recognizes this is not only caused by the attitudes of others regarding her, but women also put themselves in this position of seeing their body as a mere thing.

A reason for not fully engaging with the world with the lived body described by Young (1980, pp.143-144) is how women tend to experience their bodies as more fragile and experience a lack of consciousness about their bodily capacities and therefore approach things with more timidity and hesitance: “We feel as though we must have our attention directed upon our body to make sure it is doing what we wish it to do, rather than paying attention to what we want to do through our bodies” (p.144). So, this aspect, without the gaze of the other, women are again more prone to have an awareness of our body that is not in this visceral engagement. And by this conscious attention to the body women sabotage the obtainment of a resonant relationship.

But Young notes that you cannot live as a mere object. When the feminine body is seen as a mere thing, partly caused by the attitude of other regarding her, there exists a discontinuity with the body. Young notes that “to the degree that she does lie herself as mere body, she cannot be in unity with herself, but must take a distance from and exist in discontinuity with her body” (p.154). There thus is a contradiction between being a free

subject that engages in the world, and being a mere object. Because you cannot live as merely a thing, this results in women to be in a disconnection from themselves. I see this as that - as we have seen - you cannot engage in the world whilst perceiving your body as an object, while this visceral engagement is always with the phenomenological lived body. And thus, when experiencing your body as an object, this results in a discontinuous unity with yourself. This might suggest that this attention to the body as object might even cause feminine people to get disconnected from their body that can relate to the world.

Resonant relationship with the body?

Rosa describes how you, besides a relationship with the world (of things), also can have a relationship with yourself and your own body. You can be alienated from your body, but it can also be a resonant relationship. Interestingly he thus makes a distinction between the evaluation of the relation between the self and the body, and the body and the world. In this case, when the body is seen as a ‘source of inspiration’ for the self, this is evaluated as a resonant relationship with the body (the object-body I would say here). This would suggest that if women may not have a better resonant relation with the world, they could still have a better relationship with their body. However, we saw that following Young, this awareness of how the body is perceived is not a good thing per se. We cannot exist as a mere object, because as human you are always a subject, and when having a connection with your body as object thus always means living in a disunity.

3.2.2 Three contradictory modalities of feminine bodily existence

In the previous section I described how women are living in a contradiction of being both subject and object for itself. Young (1980, pp.141-148) describes how women in this patriarchal society are forced to live in other yet similar contradictions that are rooted in this objectification. Deriving from this tension between subjectivity and being a mere object are three contradictory modalities of feminine bodily existence: ambiguous transcendence, inhibited intentionality, and discontinuous unity.

Women are put more into immanence, even though to engage in the world you need to engage with transcendence. This ambiguity of the feminine lived body is following Young (1980) “not the ever present possibility of any lived body to be passive, to be touched as well as touching, to be grasped as well as grasping” (p.145), but this transcendence of the lived body is rather “a transcendence which moves out from the body in its immanence in an open

and unbroken directedness upon the world in action” (p.145). So, this regards the way women keep a motion close to themselves and are thus not using this mobility to its full potential. And Young describes how the feminine body is more eager to stay in immanence or “better is *overlaid* with immanence” (p.145), and therefore the transcendence of the feminine body is always an ambiguous transcendence. In this way do women for example only use their arm while throwing a ball, while the rest of the body stays relatively still. And thus, part of the body remains in immanence. I interpret this as even though their lived body is still present and engaging in the world, this is not with full openness and activeness.

According to Young (1980, p.146) this has to do with that the feminine bodily existence has *inhibited intentionality*, because it does not use its full capacities and withholds a full bodily commitment. Of course, women are still in and with the world, but this is with hesitation and restrained. When for a motion the body holds back and moves only a part of the body, while the rest of the body stays relatively immobile, this causes a discontinuous unity too. Because the body part that is reaching in transcendence is not a unity with the rest of the body which remains in immanence. And thus “the character of the inhibited intentionality whereby feminine motion severs the connection between aim and enactment, between possibility in the world and capacity in the body, itself produces this discontinuous unity” (Young, 1980, p.147). Women are “referred onto *itself* as well as onto possibilities in the world” (Young, p.148). And therefore, women always live in these contradictions. Because to be human is to be an engaging embodied subject. But at the same time women are in ways self-referred. And in this way Young (1980) summarizes: “To the extent that feminine existence lives her body as a thing, she remains rooted in immanence, is inhibited, and retains a distance from her body as transcending movement and from engaging in the world’s possibilities” (p.148). In the end it comes down to that the ideal structures of this (embodied) subjectivity that are also needed for resonance – that consists of aspects like being a unity, having unconstrained action and intentionality, and transcendence – are restrained by feminine existence.

3.3 ACCELERATION AND THE FEMININE BODY

I showed how besides the acceleration of society, an important variable of modernity is the patriarchal influence on the feminine bodily existence. In this section I will integrate these two aspects of our contemporary society that both influence our embodied relationship to the world. Rosa says that this acceleration is oppressive and causes people to feel alienated. And as we have seen, causes the oppression of the feminine body people to be more closed off from the world, and thus alienated as well. I suggest these are two variables of modern society that have a similar effect on our relationship to the world in terms of spatiality.

Firstly, I will compare how these have a similar influence of both being oppressive in the same ways and secondly combine them to examine what it means for women to live in a society that is both accelerating as patriarchal. By laying these theories of Young and Rosa next to each other, this will show that the conclusions Rosa makes about acceleration could also in some respects be applicable to the oppression of feminine existence. In chapter 2 I gave an exposition of the aspects of acceleration and what this does to our experience of our relationship to the world. Hereafter in section 3.4.1 the aspects of them that are relevant to feminine existence will be discussed, including the relation this has with resonance. The focus will be on the aspect of spatiality. I argued Rosa does not include the feminine existence in his theory about resonance, and when he does, I argued he makes the wrong conclusion by not appreciating that the feminine being in the world is a relation of alienation. In section 3.4.2 I will show how his account of resonance could still apply to it.

3.3.1 Spatial dimension of oppression

So far mostly aspects of feminine bodily comportment and motility are discussed. Young (1980, p.149) says that from this must follow that there are particular modalities of feminine spatiality. Young describes how women tend to not use the full space that is available to them. That women often inhabit a smaller space than is available, I suggest also means that for women this space has a different meaning. So does Young (1980, p.149) notice, following Merleau-Ponty, that phenomenal space is generated by engaging in space, by the body's motion and intentional relations with space. And by being active and taking initiative, this creates meaning between the body and the space around you. I think this means that for women space has less meaning, because for women the space of 'yonder' "exists for feminine existence, but only as that which she is looking into, rather than moving

into” (p.150). So, the meaning of space arises from actively engaging in it with intentionality, and exactly this is what women tend to do less. Women tend to stay close to their bodies: “to the extent, that is, that feminine bodily existence is self-referred and thus lives itself as an *object*, the feminine body exists *in space*” (p.151). So says Young of feminine spatiality that “the space available to our movement is constricted space, (...) women tend to wait for and then *react* to its approach rather than going forth to meet it” (p.143). So, because “feminine spatial existence is *positioned*” and “rooted *in place*” (p.151), there is less engagement in the world and this place before us has less meaning for women. Following Young this also regards the meaning of objects in the world with perception. Women also see visual space as being more fixated in place. So says Young: “the objects in visual space do not stand in a fluid system of potentially alterable and interchangeable relations correlative to the body’s various intentions and projected capacities” (p.152).

In chapter 2 I illustrated how Rosa sees the underlying mechanism of acceleration, specifically of technological acceleration, to be a loss of meaning of space. This problem of the loss of connectedness with the world as spatial entity is because of the increase of changes and developments per unit of time. There is a disconnection from place where we do not find meaning anymore *through* the situatedness of place. And this is what according to Rosa causes alienation. I think a comparable thing happens with the feminine bodily existence because of the system of oppression they are rooted in. “The tendency for feminine body to remain partly immobile in the performance of a task which requires the movement of the whole body illustrates this characteristic of feminine bodily existence as rooted *in place*” (Young, 1980, p.151). You can say that the oppression of patriarchy has in this sense an opposite mechanism than acceleration has. Women have a loss of meaning of space, because they are rooted in place, and stay immobile and close to themselves. While acceleration causes the loss of meaning of space, because there are no spatial barriers at all, which causes them to disconnect from space. Women are alienated because they have a spatial barrier, are restricted in their spatiality, characterized by “closures of immobility and fixity” (p.152). But I suggest they both come down to the idea that there is a loss of engagement with space where this meaning otherwise would have been created. Resonance requires affecting the world around you to come to this responsive relationship to the world. Both living in an accelerating society, and living with a feminine body in patriarchal society, cause the lack of this meaningful engagement and affecting of space.

3.3.2 Resonance as solution?

I illustrated how the underlying mechanisms of acceleration affect the meaning of space in a comparable way as the oppressive mechanism of patriarchal society for the feminine bodily existence does. Both these ‘variables’ of society have an alienating effect because of this. Rosa says that resonance may be a solution for acceleration. Can resonance then be a solution for women in this system of oppression? In chapter 2 I discussed how Rosa (2016, p.130) emphasizes that resonance is not about a wish for society to deaccelerate, but rather an independence of the mechanisms of the accelerating society. When resonance is a relationship with the world that is independent of the accelerating aspect of society, which is described by Rosa as oppressive, can resonance work in the same way for being less affected by oppressive aspects of feminine existence? So, can resonance then be a relationship to the world in which women can be independent and uninfluenced by patriarchal society?

I think the paradox here is that Rosa both says acceleration is an obstruction of resonance, at the same time as that resonance can be the solution for it. Seeing resonance as a solution may not be the right way of approaching it, while exactly the problem with this oppression is that it involves this influence on the relationship to the world. Thus, the problem is the obstruction of the obtainment of resonance. Rosa mentions that power structures are intrinsically linked with resonance, whilst resonance has to do with self-efficacy, and power often undermines this. However, in this sense he sees resonance as something that can overcome this: “Resonance theory therefore aims to restore self-efficacy to the powerless” (p.456). This makes resonance both the solution of subordination, as something that is repressed by these structures of power. I suggest that resonance then is not the solution, but rather a goal. And the exact problem of oppression is that it is harder to obtain this goal. It is harder to obtain resonance when existing in a system of oppression. I have argued that women have a harder time obtaining resonance, because they are rooted in this system of oppression in modern society.

In section 2.3 I discussed how Rosa (2019) argues that resonance, and thus his idea of ‘the good life’, is not based on the opportunities you have or your sociocultural factors, but rather “on the ways in which world is or can be passively experienced and actively appropriated or adapted” (p.27). I argue that it is not enough to say that it only depends on the way you relate to your situation. It is the case that your relationship to the world equals the way you *experience* your situation. However, when your situation is harder than someone

else's, having a good relationship with this situation and the world is also harder to obtain. And to say that people themselves can obtain resonance to counteract or be independent of the oppressive system I think does not acknowledge that this existence is an existence of oppression. Which means it is based on structural injustice and thus a situation of having an unfair disadvantage.

5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I showed how Rosa argues that the experience of modernity is an experience of acceleration, which results in a relation to the world of alienation. I illustrated the underlying mechanisms of acceleration. The dimensions of technological acceleration, acceleration of social change, and acceleration of pace of life each have their ways of influencing the way we experience life and ways of causing a relation to the world of alienation. Resonance counteracts this and is a successful relationship to the world that is a positive encounter with the world that is experienced as if the world is responsive. For this is required to engage in the world and affect the world around you, as well as being open to the world for it to let it 'respond' to you. In this thesis I included a specific bodily situatedness and relationship to the world and focussed on feminine existence in modern society. This feminine embodied relation to the world is based on patriarchal relations of power and oppression and feminine existence thus has her source in the particular situation as conditioned by oppression in contemporary society. I argued how this oppression of the feminine body causes women to be alienated as well. I illustrated how the mechanisms of oppression of the feminine body are comparable with the experience of acceleration in terms of spatiality. Therefore, I showed how a structural problem of modern society is not only acceleration, but for the feminine existence patriarchal and sexist society causes women to be alienated as well. And thus because of modern society they are withheld from obtaining resonance.

The aim of this thesis was not only to give an addition to Rosa's theory by including the situatedness of feminine existence in modernity. It also includes a critique on Rosa on not including aspects of oppression in his account of acceleration and resonance. I argued it is problematic that he does not include other factors of society, especially those situations that are rooted in systems of oppression. Rosa portrays to have built a universal theory about the 'good life' and takes acceleration in isolation as the main problem of alienation in modernity. He thus does not include factors of society in which some groups have an unfair disadvantage in the search for resonance, other than by the effects of acceleration.

When Rosa does include women in his theory I think he glorifies this existence, because Rosa says women presumable can obtain resonance more easily. I showed that this is not the case when we look at it from the perspective of the phenomenology of the feminine body developed by Young. I argued that the way Rosa describes women have a better relationship

to their body, is not what is especially good for obtaining resonance, and may even be destructive. Because it is not an awareness *to* the body, but *with* it, that is required for a resonant relationship to the world. And by not making this distinction between the lived body and the body as object, I argued that Rosa's claim that women are more prone to obtain resonance is flawed. So, the claim that women are better in a resonant relationship because of the relationship they have with their body does in the end mean they are connected to their body as an object, but this exactly does not evolve in a resonant relation to the world. And could even obstruct the obtainment of a 'good' relationship with the world, and thus obstruct the obtainment of resonance.

As discussed, is for resonance a visceral, active engagement with the lived body required. From this an experience of a responsive relationship with the world can emerge. I showed, following Young, how the feminine existence is an existence of being self-referred and women are therefore more closed off from the world. A person can never be fully closed off from the world, because to be a human subject is to engage in the world. But exactly this contradiction of women of being both subject and object for itself, causes a disunity with themselves. That women are more closed off from the world, means that women are therefore also withheld to obtain resonance. Because a relation that is closed off is, following Rosa, an immediate indicator for a relation of alienation.

So, Rosa argues we are closed off from the world because of the oppression of acceleration in modern society. I argued that the same problem exists for the feminine bodily existence because of the oppression of patriarchal society, and argued this situatedness should have been included in his theory of modernity and resonance. This oppression causes the obtainment of a good relationship to the world to be obstructed. And getting in a state of resonance with the world is in the end the goal to accomplish 'the good life.'

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