

The Fast-Forward Viewer: Video Speed and the Aesthetics of Overconsumption

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Abstract: Accelerated video playback, now a standard feature in the interfaces of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, has been offering the act of viewing in a mode of time-efficient consumption. This study focuses on how speed-watching practices—enabled through interface options such as 1.5x, 2x, or even 3x playback—diminish sensory engagement and reconfigure moving images into commodified, extractable units. Accelerated playback erodes the tactile and immersive dimensions of audiovisual media, reducing visual experience to a superficial and instrumental encounter. Drawing on the concepts of the attention economy and dromology, the paper situates speed-watching within a broader cultural logic governed by acceleration. In this context, aesthetic and narrative dimensions are subordinated to a utilitarian logic that prioritizes speed, control, and content volume. By analyzing speed-watching within the platform-driven dynamics of contemporary digital media, the study argues that the desire to consume more in less time not only reshapes user-content relationships but also redefines the very terms of aesthetic experience.

Keywords: Video, Consumption, Aesthetic, Digital Media, Attention Economy