



## **Time Sense, Time Emotions and the Death of Democratic Time**

Colonisation was never just about land and labour – at its heart was a colonisation of temporality itself. Standardised clock and railway time did more than synchronise schedules; it imposed an abstract, extraction-serving grid over cyclical, ecological, cosmological time – the time of monsoons, rituals and the body's own rhythms. If duration becomes property rather than a relationship, then the self that lives within it must also be efficient, productive, extractable - a colonised inner life that mirrors the colonised clock.

### **Why Faster Never Arrives**

The counter-intuitive heart of the acceleration problem is this: speeding up was supposed to give us more free time, but instead it creates a permanent 'structural time-famine'. Modern life is an ever-expanding horizon of possible experiences, and no matter how fast we go, we cannot bridge the gap between what we could do and what we actually get to do. So the faster we go, the more we feel that we are falling behind. Speed doesn't just steal hours; it steals the ground on which meaning, resonance, and spiritual attention depend, because attention itself needs unhurried duration to take root.

## **Democracy Cannot Survive Without Slowness: The Death of Democratic Time**

Here is the sharper claim: democracy isn't just slowed by acceleration – it is structurally incompatible with it. Deliberation, dissent, dialogical trust-building, collective awakening all demand a kind of time that cannot be crammed into a shorter period without changing its nature, just as a conversation cannot be sped up and still be a conversation. When political systems have to keep pace with the rhythm of markets and media cycles and algorithmic feeds, the mode of decision-making shifts from reasoned argument to reactive impulse and this results in a new, faceless form of domination – one that governs not through visible coercion but through the sheer impossibility of keeping up.

It changes the framing of democratic decline from a simple story of moral failure among leaders to a deeper structural diagnosis: as governance is unable to keep pace with the speed of social change, institutions appear dysfunctional, public trust corrodes, and collective identity becomes unstable – fertile ground for the polarisation and identity politics that occupy the space once filled by deliberation. Real self-rule demands a common, unhurried pace; and when you take that pace away, the outward forms of democracy can survive while its living essence dies in silence.

### **The Emotion of Speed Structure**

The feelings are not incidental to this story; they are its infrastructure. Anxiety is what a nervous system feels when it is always waiting for a future it can't slow down to meet. Burnout is a body's sensation when rest itself has been subsumed into "recovery time" for more productivity, rather than remaining an end in itself. Resentment is what a community feels when it feels that decisions are made too quickly to have been made with them, but not for them.

Fast time harms not only institutions and the outer structures but also the capacity for resonance, the felt, reciprocal relationship between self and world that many contemplative traditions simply call presence, communion, or attentive love. The emotional textures of grief, wonder, gratitude, and stillness resist measurement and refuse to be rushed, and so they are the first to go when every moment has to be justified by its productivity.