



## Speed and Politics (Semiotext

*Paul Virilio , Benjamin Bratton (Introduction)*

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## From Reader Review Speed and Politics (Semiotext for online ebook

**Scot says**

War is no longer about space, it has now moved to the vector of time. As everything moves faster such as the shift from arrows to bullets to missiles or feet to horses to tanks, modern warfare no longer requires a battlefield. Written in the mid-70s following the 1968 French revolt, this is old enough that it does not even include the internet or more digital communication but it is easy enough to imagine what Virilio would say about such things as it relates to speed, politics, and further automation. Critically conceived and well thought through, dense at times and seamless at others, a good start for me as I plan to dig deep into this modern philosopher/social critics work.

**Jimmy says**

I like the old Semitext covers far better.

## Ahmed Elsawy says

**Anna says**

I'd like to get the new edition too.

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### **Terence says**

found this really frustrating, I do not think it has aged well but mainly because so much of its observations have been embraced and reiterated. It comes across as very obvious and in some areas incredibly lazy with its hasty connections.

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### **Hussein Ebeid says**

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### **Aung Sett Kyaw Min says**

i was really looking forward to reading more virilio so it's a shame that i didn't enjoy this book as much as i would have liked to.

section 4 of Part III and Part IV are the most theoretically fleshed out whereas the rest of the book reads like process notes, as if virilio is theorizing on the go without giving much depth to his ideas.

we are treated to the thesis that "history progresses at the speed of its weapons systems", followed by a string of observations/musings pertaining to rule of speed (dromocracy), hierarchy of speed, city as a transit of different speeds (peasants, militia, highwaymen, bourgeoisie), war as speed (closing the distance), the transition from terrestrial warfare (striated space, obstacles) to naval warfare (smooth space, frictionless, permanent threat of the invisible fleet), the application of war-time logistical technology to organizing and managing society during peace time and finally the progressive disappearance of space in the virtual instantaneity of the means of delivering destruction and the disappearance of politics and political decision in the dromocratic vortex. The last two points in particular are developed at length.

Virilio certainly displays an impressive command of historical facts but his theorizing comes across as dazzlingly attention deficit, which is a shame because the subject matter deserves a more sustained treatment. In fact, I would conclude that Virilio is one of the worst offenders of the syntactic excesses of the kind that French post structuralist philosophers are infamous for (Baudrillard being the gold standard). Therefore, despite Virilio's prophetic observations, this is simply not rigorous philosophy.

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### **Scott says**

*"History progresses at the speed of its weapons systems"*

OK, so I make a living being a web developer with a specialty in social networks. Does that mean I'm even more of a hypocrite if I read Paul Virilio and like it? Am I helping to propagate the *integral accident*?

Maybe.

While Paul Virilio has been compared to Marshall McLuhan, he never seemed to get the same American recognition...like say being in a movie theater line in the movie *Annie Hall*. I don't think the comparison is that great, but a small book review hardly seems the place to refute that.

This book (essay) is a cultural criticism concerning speed and military and political uses in real world transportation and information transfer. As its title may suggest, speed takes center stage in the argument. According to Virilio, speed plays the largest role in how civilization got to where it is presently. It's a fairly large historical look, kind of like Foucault and maybe even Deleuze & Guattari. Virilio was part of the 1968 uprising in Paris, so the parallels are there. This is not just about the military-industrial complex, but how the military-scientific-industrial-entertainment complex propels societies, by movement and circulation over territories. Dromology is not only the logic of speed but also the impact.

It doesn't paint a very hopeful picture, so everyone might want to just make love or go dancing, or read Deleuze, which I find more joyful. Also, it doesn't explain technologies like text messaging which seems to be some kind of Marshall McLuhan rear view mirrorism to letter writing, which is probably best explained in a *Boondocks* episode:

(Do not read further if you find political correctness more important than satire)

Man, I don't get that.

Get what?

That textin' shit

And what's wrong with textin'?

...

I mean why would anyone in their right mind spend 15 minutes tryin' to type some shit they could've called and said in 5 seconds. Plus it involves typin' with your thumbs. Which I just don't approve of. I don't know about you, but I ain't got time to read nothin' that a mother@#\$%er typed with his thumbs.

...

Shit, I be textin' my ass off. Bitches like textin'. I be textin' em all the time. As a matter of fact, I also be textin' my weed man too 'cause you know he don't like to be on the phone, so I text him.

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