# The University of Disaster

## 1AC

#### Our thesis begins in a chronopolitical epoch, a world in which modernity’s liberal praxis of speed, acceleration, and efficiency has ushered out globalized warfare at the expense of creating the everyday elimination of wasteful expenditure. Such is the precarity of post 9/11 America, with the elimination of free speech, forwarding of “alternative facts,” expansion of global warming, and continual disintegration of human rights. In the name of progress, democracy produces emotions of fear and a desire for security which is used as a fuel for exterminating difference at home. Endo-colonization manifests itself as a bottom-up ordering of domestic populations, quietly dividing and managing internally rather than enacting noisy crusades abroad.

Mark Lacy, 2014

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Virilio suggests that in a ‘chronopolitical’ time – when weapons of destruction appear to have put an end to war between great powers – the ‘military elite’ turns its attention inwards, toward the individuals, ‘mobs’, networks and failed/rogue states that pose a threat to the order and security of liberal capitalist society. This can lead to an interpretation of his position – fuelled by some of his comments – in terms of an ‘all-powerful’ military class that constantly finds new threats and enemies to maintain its position in society. I suggest that **Virilio’s position points to many sources that push for the endo-colonization of society: the endocolonization of society is also driven by the citizenry’s desire for security, by the ‘ideology of security and health’ in what he calls a ‘trans-political’ condition (a time when politics is increasingly obsessed with the ‘basic instincts’ of security, health and consumerism); and endo-colonization is driven by the technologists and protection sciences that design new technologies of security.** Virilio suggests that **endo-colonization is made possible by** a degraded political culture, **a ‘democracy of emotion’ that is obsessed with dangerous otherness and difference, distorting our perception of insecurity**. His comments on the democracy of emotion – and the ‘synchronization of affect’ – can be easily misinterpreted: **Virilio could be interpreted as suggesting that politics and security is increasingly driven by basic emotional responses that are circulated by all the media that surround us**; on this view, the Bush administration was driven by emotion (anger, revenge) in its response to 9/11 – and we were carried along with emotion, our desire for revenge. **I suggest that while this ‘synchronization of affect’ can ‘capture’ us** – and there have certainly been moments when I have been captured by this synchronization of affect, the standardized responses to events circulated by different media– **there are limits to this interpretation**: states and militaries, simply put, might create policies that respond to the fears and emotions of the citizenry but there can be **strategic, economic and ethical limits**. I suggest that Virilio’s lines of inquiry on the synchronization of affect and the democracy of emotion require some clarification: as I suggest through an encounter with Félix Guattari’s writings on fascism and capitalism, capitalist states do not want collective emotions to get out of control, to descend into the desire for unending war and fascism. What Virilio is suggesting is a culture of fear dominates our sense of living with otherness and difference (the poor, immigrants, minorities): and this fear permeates our lives, our being-in-the-world. What Virilio is suggesting though his use of the concept of endo-colonization is this: states might not be concerned with conquering territory or distant populations but they are concerned with policing the messiness of a world order that is generating what Zygmunt Bauman calls the human waste of the global economy. And while we might have a fear of terrorists that can result in wars and the endo-colonization of society, the pervasive ‘background noise’ of post Cold War societies is a fear and anger toward those who are viewed as the mess and waste of contemporary life: this concern with policing the circulation of human waste and the ‘dangerous classes’ is one of the enduring ethico-political concerns in Virilio’s writing since the 1970s. Virilio has never bought into the optimistic liberal story of progress, of a world where technological innovation and the expansion of capitalism will improve the human condition on a global scale: it might create more and more spaces of the ‘good life’ around the planet but it will continue to produce populations that will pose problems for increasingly paranoid citizens/consumers. These fearful citizen/consumers will desire more endo-colonization, more technological solutions to the insecurity they feel. Endocolonization is not simply a response to ‘imaginary’ fears (although fear and insecurity is distorted in the public sphere); endo-colonization responds to the fragility and insecurity produced by the globalization of neoliberal, networked societies in the post-Cold War world. This chapter introduces these themes with an optimistic story about the future of security, technology and global politics: the story provides a way of introducing and explaining the logic of Virilio’s negativity about tendencies that underpin the propaganda of progress about the future of society.

#### Colleges and Universities have become political sanatoriums – functioning as spatially constructed theaters which produce closed-systems that serve those in power but never breach reality. Academia manufactures “social desirables” who are alienated and separated from everyday living. This process is overly optimistic – mandating that you discover a breakthrough, push forward, chart new paths – and represses any attempt to centralize negativity. Build around acceleration, this tunnel-vision produces a crisis of speed in which critical reflection is minimized, uncomfortable questions are droned out, and negative implications are suppressed to enable the “propaganda of progress”.

Mark Lacy, 2014

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Writing after the events of May ’68, Michel Foucault comments about students and universities in terms of his interest in ‘rituals of exclusion’, suggesting that the university system takes students ‘out of circulation’, while, at the same time, preparing them for integration into ‘adult’ society and the world of work: ‘Insidiously’, Foucault writes, ‘he will have received the values of this society. He will have been given “socially desirable models of behaviour” through a system that distances the student from their “real milieu”.’ Foucault goes on to suggest that: The student is put outside of society, on a campus. Furthermore, he is excluded while being transmitted a knowledge which is traditional in nature, obsolete, ‘academic’ and not directly tied to the needs and problems of today. This exclusion is underscored by the organization around the student of social mechanisms which are fictitious, artificial and quasi-theatrical (hierarchical relationships, academic exercises, the ‘court’ of examination, evaluation). Finally, the student is given a game-like way of life; he is offered a kind of distraction, amusement, freedom which, again, has nothing to do with real life: it is this kind of artificial, theatrical society, a society of cardboard, that is being built around him; and thanks to this, young people from 18 to 25 are thus, as it were, neutralized by and for society, rendered safe, ineffective, socially and politically castrated. In his later writings Virilio appears to share Foucault’s cynicism about the inability of universities to deal with the ‘real’ problems of society but he takes his position to a level of provocation – writing with what many will see as a lack of ‘serious’ philosophical and historical analysis – that many critics would see as a another example of the problems with indulgent French intellectuals. The University of Disaster appears to displace the Museum of the Accident in Virilio’s arsenal of provocative interventions; and there appears to be a strong ‘family resemblance’ in Virilio’s conceptual world between these interventions. But I want to suggest that the University of Disaster is best understood – not as a détournement, a subversive conceptual provocation or comment on our relation to the propaganda of progress – but as an project or direction for the universities of the twenty-first century, as a provocation to get us to think about the purpose of university research and education. In The Administration of Fear, Virilio comments: At the time of the Sorbonne, Salamanca, and Bologna, universities were an incontrovertible collectivity (Greco-Latin, Judeo-Christian and Arab). We need to rediscover this authority and depth of field, this intelligence of the state of the world, the lack of which explains the lifelessness of current political proposals. Virilio declares that the ‘universality’ of the contemporary disaster means that ‘immediate reform’ of the university system is required: this reform would involve ‘setting up a sort of general hospital of science’ that would aim to focus on the ‘accident in knowledge’ that threatens human existence. **The sciences that have the potential to produce these accidents are unable** (or unwilling) **to think critically about the consequences of their projects:** Arrogant to the point of insanity, BIG SCIENCE has become powerless to check the excess of its success. This is not so much because of any lack of knowledge as because of the outrageousness, the sheer hubrisof a headlong rush without the slightest concern for covering the rear; it’s incredible ethical and philosophical deficit. So what is needed, on this view, is a University of Disaster that seeks to interrogate technological progress, to examine our seduction by the propaganda of progress: ‘It would mean official inauguration of this UNIVERSITY OF DISASTER, which would constitute the indispensable MEA CULPA now essential to the credibility of a knowledge in the throes of becoming completely suicidal.’ On this view, universities – needing to attract investment for projects and justify state support – are unwilling to pursues lines of inquiry that will open up uncomfortable questions about emerging policies and technologies: the job of universities is to find ‘technical fixes’ not to ask more fundamental questions about progress and the development of society. When you encounter ideas like these it is easy to adopt the position of the commentator that thinks that French thinkers are too obsessed with the creation of bold statements designed to create a ‘frisson’ of intellectual excitement in Paris. To declare that we need ‘immediate reform’ of the university is obviously about stirring controversy: and there is no ‘evidence’ put forward to justify such a claim, just provocative ‘philosophical’ suggestions. Virilio provides us with a radical sketch, a bold intervention. But maybe French universities are full of academics working on projects critical of the ‘military-scientific complex’, the ‘accidents’ of progress, the future dangers of nanotechnology and biotechnology, and so on. Virilio does not offer any evidence to support his claim: maybe these are the reflections of a retired academic who is out of the game, who is writing about universities as they once were (or maybe never were). And to imply that the ‘collectivity’ created by a new age of the University of Disaster will result in an actor that can place a limit on acceleration and ‘Big Science’ might be seen as both overly romantic and elitist. Is this where Virilio ends up – with the idea that the philosopher kingsof the University of Disaster will help us navigate our way out of the time of the ‘integral accident’? The collectivity of the ‘multitude’ displaced by the collectivity of the philosopher kings. While such an interpretation of his position is plausible, **I think that Virilio is raising important questions about the role that universities play in the ‘propaganda of progress’; from Virilio’s perspective universities are optimistic places where young researchers come to improve themselves and society through the creation of a cosmopolitan culture of technology and business.** Universities are spaces that harness the collective power of the propaganda of progress to create a better world; **negativity is repressed, exiled to the margins in an environment that is often the place of – as Foucault put it – the ‘fictitious, artificial and quasi-theatrical’. Negativity or critical thinking come to the surface**6 **– but the driving force of the university is toward the production of people, products and practices that will improve a global society. Universities become laboratories that seek to design and secure the future. But what we need to do, according to Virilio, is create interdisciplinary research that seeks to examines the vulnerabilities or fragility in the policies and ‘critical infrastructures’ intended to make life better, faster, safer and more efficient.**

#### Thus the advocacy: public colleges and universities in the United States ought not limit any constitutionally protected speech through the University of Disaster.

#### The rapid acceleration brought about by Big Science and its reckless progress mandates a slowing down. The University of Disaster emerges as a bulwark of cynical critique which technically analyzes material and metaphysical accidents and their potential solutions. This shifts the University away from close-minded optimism and towards an open tutorial which enables dialogue, questioning, and time to consider our options. Stopping the crash of modernity founded in totalities such as climate change, technology, and capitalism necessitates an injection of negativity into academia.

John David Ebert, 2013

“The Virilio Dictionary” edited by John Armitage, pp. 202-203.

By **The University of Disaster**, Virilio (2010a [2007]) **does not so much** **mean the foundation and creation of a real university dedicated to studying accidents and catastrophes** – he has stated that he is not militant enough for that – **as** he **does the taking up of a point of view regarding the situation of today’s sciences and humanities. Such an approach would study not only literal disasters**, or accidents of substances**, but also** other **disasters such as accidents of knowledge and epistemology. For example**, the disaster of specialisation in the universities, or the disaster of the pollution of distances on the earth by technologies of telepresence and the global tourism industry (which have a tendency to exhaust places by over- exploiting them), or else the disaster of the triumph of real- time technologies, which have brought history to an end by contracting time into an eternal present that eliminates history and replaces it with accidents. Thus, the concept of the university of disaster functions like one of those old memory theatres in Renaissance rhetoric designed as mnemonic devices for organising a specific type of discourse; in this case, one that studies the accident of substances as well as the accidents of knowledge in all their various manifestations. In The University of Disaster, Virilio suggests that, in light of the failure of the ‘success’ of Big Science, the university could be reformed in such a way as to counter the barbarism of progress, the hubris and arrogance of a science that no longer knows, or respects, any bounds and has led from an accident in knowledge to a mass- produced repetition of accidents in substances. This would also be meant to counter Aristotle’s assertion that there is no science of the accident, only a science of substances. But, due to **the spectacular success of this science of substances**, it **has wreaked havoc on all traditional forms of knowledge, threatening to render them obsolete. The problem**, then, **with Big Science** in particular, **is that it remains oblivious to all its ravages and sees only its own successes instead of seeing how it perpetuates integral accidents that cause chains of other accidents in the various domains of atomic physics, biology and genetics**. The ultimate hubris of Big Science, Virilio further notes, is the global outsourcing of looking for an exo- planet for the human race to colonise while leaving the Earth, now rendered too small by the ever- accelerating pace of progress, behind. **Speed, in other words, has miniaturised the Earth and transformed it into a claustrophobic object. Hence, the accident of knowledge of the success of progress has paradoxically accelerated the finitude of the Earth. This is one of the effects of a technology that has estranged us from geophysics**. As Virilio (2009: 42) says in Grey Ecology**, the university was founded around the year 1000 as an antidote to barbarism, but any sort of university of disaster founded nowadays, either real or imagined, would have to counter and curb the effects of the barbarism of the progress of science by making its various knowledge accidents visible through concrete applications**.

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the best dromological praxis.

#### Dromology is the science of speed – the analysis, study, and understanding of acceleration, velocity, and the drive to progress. Speed shapes both our communicative schemas, which are situated within a democratic process overloaded with information, and material conditions, which are founded according to a constant and total war fought along the basis of productivity and shape our cultural schema. Explanations of modernity must begin with an analysis of speed in order to account for technological innovations, the productive ideology of capitalism, and the capacity for accident.

John David Ebert, 2013

“Dromology” in “The Virilio Dictionary” edited by John Armitage, pg 69-71.

From the Greek word dromos for ‘race’ or ‘racetrack’, dromology is a science invented by Virilio for the study of speed and its impacts upon human cultural and technological systems**.** **Speed**, according to Virilio, **exerts** a number of **transformative effects upon human culture, sometimes in very subtle ways, such as, for instance, the phenomenon of the gradual enclosure of the human individual inside the automobile** as it moves ever faster, first with goggles, then with the windscreen and finally the complete enclosure of the body within the sedan. Indeed, for Virilio**, speed is the decisive factor in human technological evolution.** In Negative Horizon(2005a [1984]), he surveys the course of technological development, noting that **there has been a gradual increase in speed throughout history, beginning with woman as the first pack animal to the mounted horse to the chariot and the road, and then onward to the automobile and the aeroplane.** He points out that in the nineteenth century, a transportation revolution occurred which developed from the railroad to the automobile to the aeroplane, **and that these technologies of relative speed tended to support industrial democracy. The absolute speed achieved by the communications revolution**, on the other hand, with the advent of electromagnetic technologies such as the telegraph, telephone, radio and TV **tended to abolish the necessity for human physical movement and to reverse into the stasis of inertia of human individuals in their homes surrounded by the gadgets of their smart houses that provide so many services for them that they no longer have any need even to leave the house.** Virilio often points out the paradox of stasis resulting from the gradual increase in speed, as in the case of Howard Hughes, whom he discusses primarily in The Aesthetics of Disappearance(2009a [1980]), who spent the first half of his life rushing about the planet in his aeroplanes, only to end, in the second half, isolating himself in his hotel room from which he rarely ventured forth at all. The effects of the transport revolution on military technologies, Virilio insists, have led to the gradual disappearance of the geostrategic battlefield, so that the front is no longer to be found at the boundary of the territory, but wherever the vectors of mechanised transport are found. Where the mechanised vehicles are, there we find the state, for the country has today disappeared in the non- place of the state of emergency in which territorial space vanishes and only time remains. Whereas in conventional warfare we could still talk about manoeuvres of armies in the field, today there is no field, since the speed of reaction time is so fast and the invasion of the instant now succeeds the invasion of the territory. The countdown becomes the scene of battle now. Reaction time and the time for political decision are reduced to nothing by nuclear deliverance. Today, speed is war. In Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology(2006 [1977]), where Virilio first developed the idea of dromology, he points out that the reason the West was able, through colonial genocide and ethnocide, to conquer other populations was because of its speed. It moved faster than these other societies because of its ever- increasing mastery first of the sea, then the rail, then the sky, etc. In Negative Horizon, he insists, furthermore, that because the Spaniards had the horse and the Maya had no pack animals other than women, this gave the Spaniards a dromocratic superiority which allowed them to conquer the Maya simply by their ability to manoeuvre much more quickly. In Speed and Politics, he also points out how the increase in military speed has given preference to movement itself over the strategics of place, which has led to the disappearance of places themselves in what he calls ‘vehicular extermination’. The strike power of the navy in the 1940s, for instance, in which power was spoken of in knotsgave way in the 1960s to machswith the advent of jet power. Geographic localisation has therefore given way to the speed of the moving body and the undetectability of its path. Furthermore, according to Virilio, it matters little whether what is sped up is information or physical objects, since in both cases it is the message of movement itself that is at issue. Acceleration, moreover, tends to produce accidents, since the faster a technology moves, the greater the likelihood that a crash of some sort will result. Dromological speed- up has affected both the realms of transport and of human data communications equally, for after the crashes attending the speed- up of rail and maritime dromoeconomics 71 accelerations comes the crashes of planes and cars, while after them, in turn, come the electromagnetic wave trains with their mediatic crashes of video and radio signals, in which news functions as what Virilio calls The Information Bomb(2000d [1998]). Dromology is also tied in with Virilio’s concept of the aesthetics of disappearance, since excess speed tends to correspond to a loss of information content. With the speed- up of war, as we have seen, the geostrategic front disappears, while the soldier himself disappears with camouflage. With the stealth bomber, the speed- up in flight has resulted in the actual disappearance into invisibility of the aeroplane offthe radar screen. The increasing speed of the automobile leads, via the phenomenon of dromoscopy, to the impoverishment of the information content of its immediate milieu, which speeds past the observer and tends to take on a certain flatness in the process. Cities, too, are disappearing with mobile architecture and the rapidity of demolition of buildings that are not built to last for more than a dozen or so years. The speed- up in media, in addition, has led to the disappearance of deferred time, a kind of mental space in which thought could move about slowly enough to reflect upon the significance of events, into the advent of real time, in which events take place so fast that the mind cannot keep up with them, and written media, correspondingly, suffer a diminishment of information content.

# Frontlines – Extensions

## Case

### Ext --- Lacy 14 (Impact)

#### [Omitted]

### Ext --- Lacy 14 and Ebert 13 (Advocacy)

#### [Omitted]

#### [Omitted]

### Impact - Climate Change ~30s

#### Warming is close to the tipping point but we can still turn the tide. The impact outweighs - it will at best kills hundreds of millions and at worst cause global infrastructure collapse and extinctions.

Curtis Doebbler, 2011

Doebbler is an International Human Rights Lawyer, he has advised the Palestinian National Authority, made representations before the UN Human Rights Council, and has worked in Africa, Europe, and the Americas. “Two Threats to Our Existence” Ahram Weekly. http://www.masress.com/en/ahramweekly/27109

Climate change is widely acknowledged to be the greatest threat facing humanity. It will lead to small island states disappearing from the face of the earth, serious global threats to our food and water supplies, and ultimately the death of hundreds of millions of the poorest people in the world over the course of this century. No other threat -- including war, nuclear disasters, rogue regimes, terrorism, or the fiscal irresponsibility of governments -- is reliably predicted to cause so much harm to so many people on earth, and indeed to the earth itself. The International Panel on Climate Change, which won the Nobel Prize for its evaluation of thousands of research studies to provide us accurate information on climate change, has predicted that under the current scenario of "business-as-usual", temperatures could rise by as much as 10 degrees Celsius in some parts of the world. This would have horrendous consequences for the most vulnerable people in the world. Consequences that the past spokesman of 136 developing countries, Lumumba Diaping, described as the equivalent of sending hundreds of millions of Africans to the furnace. Yet for more than two decades, states have failed to take adequate action to either prevent climate change or to deal with its consequences. A major reason for this is that many wealthy industrialised countries view climate change as at worst an inconvenience, or at best even a potential market condition from which they can profit at the expense of developing countries. Indeed, history has shown them that because of their significantly higher levels of population they have grown rich and been able to enslave, exploit and marginalise their neighbours in developing countries. They continue in this vein. Still, government representatives, led by the [United States](http://www.masress.com/en/city/United+States) and other developed countries, continue to stand in the way of even the most basic action. They are blocking legally-binding minimally adequate emissions limits with the result that temperature rises are inevitable and will cause deadly harm to people in many developing countries, and will eventually destroy the planet. Ironically, these same rich countries are calling for developing countries to carry the greatest burden of cutting emissions. If developing countries were to shoulder this burden this would lead to an even greater difference in living standards between the world's richest and the poorest. But it is unlikely they could even do so if they wanted to carry such a disproportional burden. The reason is that they have neither the technology that is needed to cut emissions without literally killing their people and the richest countries and private entities therein that have the technology are not willing to share it. As if to rub salt into the wounds of the developing countries facing the inevitability of climate destruction, the developed countries are also refusing to provide even a fraction of the estimated resources needed to carry this burden and at the same time protect their people. It is true that the resources needed to stop the planet from overheating and to protect people from the climate change that we can already not prevent is not a small sum of money. According to the World Bank, it is as much as $750 billion a year at 2009 rates -- today over $1 trillion in light of the collapsing US dollar. To date, developed countries have made a top offer of $30 billion now and 100 billion by 2020. In fact, they have put more effort into mysteriously revising the World Bank figure downwards while the costs of the actions needed have risen and the damage already done has increased. Still, despite offering too little and fiddling the books to decrease the amount that they need to offer, developing countries have disbursed less than one per cent of even their inadequate pledges. It would seem to be a classic case of the rich just not caring about the poor. Indeed, they don't seem to need to care. Developed countries seem to have such disproportionate financial resources advantages that they can even purchase the support of developing countries. The tiny island archipelago of [Maldives](http://www.masress.com/en/city/Maldives), which will already most certainly disappear because of the rising sea levels caused by climate change, has, for example, given up on trying to take adequate action on climate change. Instead, it frequently supports the proposals of developed countries to take inadequate action. In 2009, its president publicly declared at the annual climate talks that he could agree to nothing better than a deal that would lead to his country disappearing under the sea. Whether the words were his or actually those of developed countries is unclear, as his speaking points are sometimes written by advisors who are paid and made available to the [Maldives](http://www.masress.com/en/city/Maldives) by rich developed countries. Regardless, it is getting harder for developed countries to ignore the "ticking clock" of climate change that has already condemned many people in the Global South to lives of misery. The year 2010 was a stark reminder when average global temperatures reached their highest level ever and natural disasters became regular occurrences.

## ROB

### Ext --- Ebert 13

#### [Omitted]

# Frontlines – Generic

## Speed K

### Nah

#### Speed analysis requires speed reading – you’ve got to learn the enemies language to fight them.

Michael Degener, 2005

“Translator’s Introduction” in Paulo Virilio’s “Negative Horizon: An Essay in Dromoscopy” pg 9

These tactics can, in part, be accounted for as resulting from the dromostopic method laid out in his preface: **Virilio intentionally shifts his focus, wilfully sustaining the double vision as a means of unleashing the secrets of speed - and for this reason** his work lends itself to a kind of speed reading**. If not as random as a stream of consciousness or automatic writing, nonetheless it careens across broad historical expanses at speed and provides few test stations or fixed footings for discursive analysis.** But there is also a political agenda at work in this method such that if the work is read too superficially, it might be mistaken for little else than a Foucauldian genealogy of the relation- ships between technologies and power. Which is not to say that Virilio does not share in some measure the tactics Foucault articulates in The Anrbaeology of Knowledge to subvert the juridico-discursive stratum of power: One remains attached to a certain image of power-law, of power- sovereignty, which was traced out by the theoreticians of right and the monarchic institution. It is this that we must break free of, that is, of the theoretical privilege of law and sovereignty, ifwe wish to analyse power within the eoncrete and historical framework of its operation."

# Frontlines - Topicality

## General Answers

### Communication/ROB

#### [Omitted]

### Acceleration DA

#### [Omitted]

### Endocolonization DA

#### [Omitted]

### CI [15s]

#### [Omitted]

### Weigh Case

#### [Omitted]

## News Affs Bad

### General

#### [Omitted]

### CI

#### [Omitted]