

# Interrogating Post-truth Politics From the Perspectives of Speed and Technology in the Age of Global Pandemic Through Paul Virilio's Dromology

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## Abstract

The spectre of post-truth politics haunts the globe, particularly in an era of the global pandemic when the threat of the invisible coronavirus renders fear, panic and insecurity. This paper considers the covid-19 pandemic as an example of dromology, when physical movements are limited and ICTs play significant roles in shaping people's perceptions. Considering the post-truth phenomena including distrust, fragmentation and xenophobia, this paper will start with a Foucauldian 'knowledge-power' paradigm of truth. This paper will critically examine the nuances of attributing post-truth politics to postmodernism, and argues that the Foucauldian account of post-truth meets its erosion under the current age of mass media. This paper will introduce Paul Virilio's thesis of dromology and argues that a Virilian 'moving-power' paradigm is more effective in interpreting the post-truth politics during the global pandemic. Virilio argues that politics was driven by the need for security, which centres on speed and assisted by the invention of technologies to speed. Given that who has the access to speed will have the power, the current democratization of power happens when information and communication technologies (ICTs) are widely used by people. Thus the 'synchronization of affect' through mass media emerges and causes the 'democracy of emotions'. The former politics that consist of opinions has been changed to responses to emotion, resulting in the post-truth chaos.

## Conclusion

To be updated.  
This research project is my dissertation project which is going to be submitted next spring. As I am still carrying on doing research, I intend to concentrate on my theoretical framework currently. The conclusion will be reserved to ensure the quality of academic research.

## Case: Covid-19 Global Pandemic

Studying the current world by Dromology is to investigate the roles of social media, which are widely used in social life due to the advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs). This paper intend to find evidence during the Covid-19 global pandemic, which involves social media, emotional opinions and post-truth political chaos, to test whether or not politics responses to emotions rather than opinions when emotions are synchronized via the instant spread of social media messages.

## Methodology Critical Hermeneutics

As a theory-testing research project, this paper will be testing the effectiveness of Virilio's theory in explanation the post-truth phenomena. The paper will take Virilio's theory of dromology and his 'moving-power' paradigm as the hypothesis and test them by engaging with the cases from the Covid-19 global pandemic.

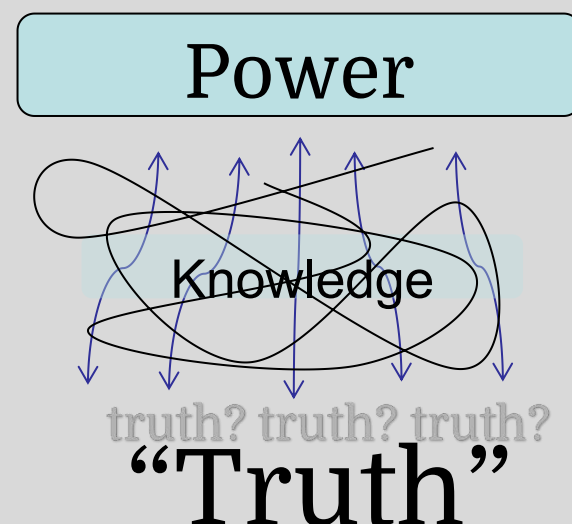
Given that this paper interrogates post-truth phenomena in light of Virilio, this paper intends to employ critical hermeneutics as the research method, for it:

- is qualitative research features in analysing power.
- is to interpret the world in terms of something else in the world.

With considerations to the aim of theory-testing and engaging with the conception of power, critical hermeneutics as a method could offer feasibility in this research project.

## Theoretical Reflections Part 1 Post-truth phenomenon and postmodernism

### The Foucauldian Paradigm of Truth



### Postmodernism and Post-truth:

- The emergence of 'Multiple truth' - Truth as one of the 'meta-narratives' (Lyotard, 1979).
- Truth as constructions, which is subjective rather than objective.
- Postmodernism: revealed and explains post-truth rather than caused it.

### Locating Virilio: Is he a postmodernist thinker?

- Whilst some scholars regard Virilio as a postmodern thinker, this paper argues that Virilio is not in line with postmodernism, for:
  - Virilio's intellectual contributions go beyond postmodernism (Armitage, 2000).
  - Unlike the prevalent claims of postmodernism which tend to get rid of metanarratives, Virilio's theorizing of dromology could be regarded as a metanarrative of 'speed'.
  - Furthermore, he argues that with the development of telecommunication technologies, the postmodern local little narratives will be ultimately transferred to 'micro narratives'. Geopolitics will be replaced by 'chronopolitics' thus no longer having the geographical notion of 'local' will diffuse.



## Theoretical Reflections Part 2 Virilio's Dromology and Post-truth phenomenon

### Dromology (Virilio, 1986[1977]):

- articulated in his work *Speed and Politics, An Essay on Dromology*.
- refers to a 'science' of speed - the study of speed.
- is to use speed as an analytical tool to relate phenomena.
- Virilio interprets the human history, politics and society in light of speed, e.g. in *Speed and Politics* he claims that "there was no industrial revolution," but rather, a "dromocratic revolution;" and also "there is no democracy, only dromocracy."
- the human condition/history is projected by the logic of speed.
- Human history has been in the process of acceleration due to continuous technological advancement.

### The Virilian "Speed-Power" Paradigm

- Whilst the Foucauldian paradigm argues that knowledge production is dominated by power, Virilio argues that power is occupied by the ones who own the access to speed.
- Truth: meets its erosion because of over-acceleration.